MARVEL

VENOM

LETHAL PROTECTOR

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FRONT COVER COLORIST
Veronica Gandini

BACK COVER COLORIST
Tom Smith

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INKERS
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LETTERERS
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MARVEL COMICS

VENOM

GUEST-STARRING SPIDER-MAN!®

LETHAL PROTECTOR

PART ONE OF SIX

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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

NOW IN HIS OWN LIMITED SERIES!

OH, MAN!

SAN FRANCISCO, FABLED CITY BY THE BAY --

-- THE **JEWEL** IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S CULTURAL CROWN.

FROM THE HIPPIE MOVEMENT OF THE SIXTIES TO HUMAN RIGHTS STRUGGLES IN THE NINETIES, SAN FRANCISCO HAS LONG BEEN A MECCA OF CREATIVITY, A HAVEN OF FREEDOM.

BUT, AS WITH MOST URBAN AREAS IN THIS MODERN AGE --

-- THERE ARE ALWAYS THOSE WHO SEEK **MORE** FREEDOM THAN THE LAW ALLOWS..!

THIS AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT *CHUMP CHANGE*, LADY!

MAYBE I'LL HAFTA TAKE MY PAY SOME *OTHER* WAY!

THAT *SCARE* YA?

GOOD!

I ALWAYS LIKE SEEIN' *FEAR* IN MY VICTIM'S EYES ...!

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

VENOM™

LETHAL PROTECTOR

WHAT A COINCIDENCE!

SO DO WE!

PART ONE:

THE DRIFTING

DAVID MICHELINIE
WRITER
MARK BAGLEY
PENCILER
DeLaROSA & MILGROM
INKERS
RICHARD STARKINGS
LETTERER
MARIE JAVINS
COLORIST
DANNY FINGEROTH
EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

YOU'RE *DESPICABLE!* YOU AND *ALL* YOUR KIND!

PREYING ON THE *DEFENSELESS*, BRINGING NOTHING BUT *MISERY!*

PAIN!

DEATH!

YOU MAKE US SICK!

WH- WHAT'RE YOU--

:GHLF= GHHHHH GHHKK KK

IT'S OVER!

NOW YOU'LL DO NOTHING BUT *DECAY*, RUNNING IN RIVULETS OF ROT AND *CORRUPTION!* MINGLING WITH THE REST OF THE *FILTH* IN THE SEWERS OF --

--Oh. FORGIVE US. WE'RE BEING *RUDE.*

HI!

WE'RE *VENOM.*

HERE...

...YOU'RE SAFE NOW.

NO, PLEASE, THERE'S NO NEED TO *THANK* US.

YOUR JOY IS REWARD ENOUGH --

--AND SENDS ME LEAPING *HAPPILY* ON MY WAY.

EEEEEEEE

YES, I AGREE -- PROTECTING INNOCENTS IS *SATISFYING* INDEED!

AFTER ALL, *WE* WERE INNOCENT ONCE -- BEFORE THAT VILE *SPIDER-MAN* SHATTERED OUR LIVES!

PLIP

YOU, MY ALIEN FRIEND, WERE REJECTED WHEN YOU TRIED TO *BOND* WITH HIM, TO BECOME HIS LIVING COSTUME --

--A GIFT *I* ACCEPTED GRATE-FULLY!

WHILE *MY* CAREER AS JOURNALIST *EDDIE BROCK* WAS OBLITERATED BY THE WEB-SLINGER'S CALLOUS, SELF-SERVING PUBLICITY PLOYS!

TRUE, WE *HAVE* RECONCILED OUR HATRED A BIT, HAVING REALIZED THAT, IN HIS OWN *TWISTED* WAY, SPIDER-MAN *ALSO* HELPS INNOCENTS!

THAT'S WHY WE'VE COME HERE, TO THE TOWN WHERE I WAS *BORN*... TO START OUR LIFE ANEW!

YES, I REALIZE IT WILL BE *DIFFICULT.*

BUT AS LONG AS WE HAVE EACH OTHER --

WE --

WILL--

--SURVIVE!

FIRST THINGS FIRST: LODGING!

SIMON! PULL OVER! HAND ME THE "WANT" SHEET!

THAT LOOK LIKE *EDWARD BROCK* TO YOU? HAIR'S DIFFERENT, BUT...

CAN'T TELL FROM HERE. BETTER MAKE SURE BEFORE CALLIN' IT IN!

P.D.

BROCK

...NO, JUST ONE NIGHT. WE'LL -- *I'LL* -- LET YOU KNOW TOMORROW IF --

HTND

KEEP THOSE HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE 'EM, FELLA! WE JUST WANT TO ASK YOU SOME -- HOLY GEEZ! I-IT *IS* HIM!

Y-YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, BROCK -- FOR *MURDER!*

EVEN HERE, NO PEACE..!

NO
PETS
PARTIES
LOUD MUSIC
COOKING
SPITTING
SMOKING
TIE-DYES
YOUNG-BLOODS

HTND

PLIP

PLIP

WE DON'T WANT TO DO THIS!

WE KNOW YOU'RE JUST DOING YOUR JOBS!

AND *FINE* JOBS THEY ARE!

THIS HURTS *US* --

SPATCH

PESH

--ALMOST AS MUCH AS IT DOES *YOU!*

KAMP

RATES

THUB

Oh, ONE OTHER THING: CANCEL THAT ROOM!

Y-Y-YOU BET!

BUSTER! WH-WHAT *IS* IT?!

HEY, I SEEN HIM ON *SIXTY MINUTES!* IT'S SOME CRAZY GUY --

--CALLED *VENOM!*

BABS, HONEY, THIS PHOTO'S GONNA PAY FOR OUR *VACATION!*

CLICK

MANHATTAN, SOME HOURS LATER...

NICE PHOTOS, PETE!

DAILY BUGLE

THANKS, BEN, I'M JUST GLAD ROBBIE *BOUGHT* THEM -- I CAN USE THE MONEY!

TOO BAD *VENOM* DIDN'T RESURFACE *HERE*. PICTURES OF HIM *ALWAYS* SELL!

YEAH, I-- *VENOM*?!

WHAT ABOUT HIM?

JUST CAME IN OVER THE U.P.I WIRE -- SOME TOURIST TOOK THIS SNAP OF VENOM IN *SAN FRANCISCO*, AFTER A RUN-IN WITH LOCAL POLICE!

GUESS WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HIM *THIS* TIME!

UH, RIGHT.

I WAS *WONDERING* WHERE HE'D GONE! BUT NOW THAT I KNOW, WHAT DO I *DO*?

AFTER ALL, IN A WAY...

...I'M *RESPONSIBLE* FOR VENOM'S *EXISTENCE*!

"*I'M* THE ONE WHO -- AS *SPIDER-MAN* -- BROUGHT THE ALIEN SYMBIOTE TO EARTH, WHEN I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A PROGRAM-MABLE *COSTUME*!

"I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS *ALIVE*, THAT IT WANTED TO JOIN WITH ME *FOR-EVER*!

"I FINALLY HAD TO USE *SOUND* TO GET RID OF IT -- THE LOUD TOLLING OF CATHEDRAL BELLS! FOR A WHILE, I THOUGHT I'D... *KILLED* IT!

"BUT IT WAS ONLY TEMPORARILY DESTROYED. HURT AS MUCH BY ***REJECTION*** AS BY PHYSICAL PAIN! REGENERATING, IT COWERED IN THE RAFTERS OF THAT VERY CHURCH, UNCERTAIN, UNTIL IT SENSED SOMEONE ELSE WHO SHARED ITS GROWING ***HATRED!***

"***EDDIE BROCK*** HAD BEEN AN ACE REPORTER FOR THE *DAILY GLOBE.*

"HE BECAME FAMOUS BY PRINTING INTERVIEWS WITH SOMEONE WHO CLAIMED TO BE THE SERIAL KILLER CALLED ***SIN-EATER.***

DAILY BUGLE
GLOBE DUPED
REAL SIN EATER REVEALED

DAILY BUGLE
GLOBE REPORTER IN HOAX

"UNTIL, AS SPIDER-MAN, *I* CAPTURED THE *REAL* MURDERER!

"HE LOST HIS JOB, HIS SELF-RESPECT, EVERYTHING -- AND BLAMED IT ALL ON ***ME!*** FINDING PURPOSE IN THEIR MUTUAL ANGER, EDDIE AND THE ALIEN JOINED TO BECOME ***VENOM!***

"AND TOGETHER, THEIR MAJOR FOCUS WAS TO ***DESTROY*** ME, SINCE THEY FELT I'D BEEN ***RESPONSIBLE*** FOR THEIR SEPARATE DOWNFALLS!

"WE BATTLED SEVERAL TIMES.

"MY *DEATH* WAS WHAT THEY LIVED FOR!

"BUT A FEW DAYS AGO, I HELPED SAVE EDDIE'S *EX-WIFE!* AND THE LOVE HE STILL FELT FOR HER MADE HIM SEE ME IN A NEW LIGHT.

RING-TOSS

"HE SWORE THAT, AS LONG AS I DIDN'T COME AFTER *HIM*, HE WOULDN'T COME AFTER *ME!* GUESS HE CONVINCED THE *SYMBIOTE*, TOO!"*

BUT... BROCK IS *SERIOUSLY* DISTURBED. AND A KILLER.

*FOR DETAILS, SEE *AMAZING SPIDER-MAN* #375, ON SALE SOON.--DANNY

CAN I LIVE WITH MYSELF IF I *DON'T* TRY TO CAPTURE HIM...

...NO MATTER *WHAT* THE PERSONAL COST?

HELLO, *MARY JANE?* COULD YOU PACK A BAG FOR ME, SWEETHEART? SOMETHING'S COME UP. I HAVE TO GO TO CALIFORNIA.

I'LL TELL YOU MORE WHEN I GET TO THE LOFT.

AND, IN CALIFORNIA, THE NEXT DAY...

I HAVE TO ADMIT, I FEEL A LITTLE LOST. *YOU* WERE BORN ON ANOTHER PLANET -- YOU HAVE AN *EXCUSE* FOR BEING ALONE!

BUT *I* GREW UP IN SAN FRANCISCO, AND NOW I CAN'T EVEN RENT A *ROOM* HERE WITHOUT BEING ARRESTED! I --

-- Hmm? CONTACT *FATHER?*

NEVER! THE *LAST* THING I'LL DO IS ASK *THAT* ICE-BLOODED MONSTER FOR HELP! BUT...

... WHAT, THEN?

WITHOUT A CAREER, WITHOUT *SPIDER-MAN* TO RAVAGE, WITHOUT *SOME* AMBITION...

... WE COULD END UP LIKE THOSE POOR *HOMELESS* PEOPLE OVER THERE, TRUNDLING OUR SAD POSSESSIONS IN GROCERY CARTS FROM SHELTER TO -- Eh?

WHAT THE --?!

WE *WARNED* YA TO FIND SOMEWHERE *ELSE* TO SET UP HOUSEKEEPIN'!

NOW WE'RE GONNA *GIVE* YA A PLACE TO STAY -- THE *HOSPITAL!*

I HEAR THEY SERVE *SOFT* FOOD THERE!

YA WON'T EVEN MISS YER *TEETH..!*

Huh?

LEAVE THEM ALONE.

Oh, MAN, DID *YOU* EVER MAKE A MISTAKE!

NO.

AAAAAAG

BUT YOU DID.

WHILE NEARBY...

THWIP

BEEN SEARCHING FOR HOURS, EVER SINCE MY *PLANE* GOT IN. USED MY PRESS CREDENTIAL AS *PETER PARKER* TO LEARN THAT BROCK WAS CHECKING INTO A *HOTEL* WHEN HE WAS SPOTTED!

AND WITH NO PLACE TO GO, I FIGURED HE MIGHT TRY BLENDING IN WITH *STREET PEOPLE* --

--SO I'VE BEEN CHECKING OUT SHELTERS! WORKERS AT THE LAST ONE SUGGESTED LOCAL PARKS; SEEMS A LOT OF *TRANSIENTS* GET BY IN THE *OPEN*. BUT SO FAR --

-- GUNSHOTS!

BDAM BDAM

EVEN IF THEY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH *VENOM*. I'D BETTER SEE IF I CAN HELP...

OOO, A *BEAR HUG!* PERHAPS WHEN WE'RE THROUGH WITH *THIS* COCKROACH, WE'LL HUG YOU BACK!

TILL YOU *BURST!*

= WHNG =

YEESH! YESTERDAY IT WAS *COPS* --

--AND NOW IT'S *THESE* GUYS! WHAT ARE THEY: F.B.I? SECRET SERVICE?

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN YOU'D GO BACK TO YOUR OLD WAYS!

SLAMM

ALL THAT TALK ABOUT *BOTH* OF US PROTECTING INNOCENTS WAS *BULL!*

BUT YOU WON'T GET ANOTHER CHANCE, VENOM!

THIS ENDS NOW!

SPAK

YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE -- WE HAD AN ARRANGE-MENT.

WE'LL DISCUSS YOUR BETRAYAL LATER.

FOR THE MOMENT, THERE'S SOME-THING YOU NEED TO KNOW: THOSE GENTLE MEN YOU REFER TO AS PEACE OFFICERS --

--AREN'T!

WHA--?

GET 'IM!

BRAKA BRAKA BRAK

CHTTTOW

BRR RR RD P

THIS IS NUTS! THE GUY IN THE SUITS ARE TRYING TO KILL ME -- BUT VENOM *ISN'T?!*

I'VE GOT A FEW ZILLION QUESTIONS TO ASK --

-- *AFTER* I MAKE SURE THE "*UZI BROTHERS*" DON'T WIPE OUT A FEW ZILLION *INNOCENT BYSTANDERS!*

THERE! LAST ONE!

NOW TO -- Aw, GEEZ! I COME THREE THOUSAND MILES LOOKING FOR A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK, ACTUALLY *FIND* THE SUCKER --

--THEN END UP RIGHT BACK WHERE I *STARTED?!*

WHERE THE BLOODY BLAZES IS VENOM *NOW?!*

*PORTLAND, OREGON; THE RESIDENCE OF **GENERAL ORWELL TAYLOR**, U.S ARMY, RETIRED.*

THERE HE IS...

THIS JUST IN FROM SAN FRANCISCO...

AT LAST!

"VENGEANCE IS MINE, SAYETH THE LORD!"

AND SOON, *HUGH*... VERY SOON, INDEED...

... RIGHTEOUS REVENGE WILL BE *OURS*, AS WELL!

SQUAD LEADER ELKINS? ASSEMBLE YOUR MEN!

TARGET SIGHTED!

BUT, IN SAN FRANCISCO, WITH THE HELP OF NEW FRIENDS, THAT TARGET HAS SINCE DROPPED **OUT** OF SIGHT!

IMPRESSIVE! I NEVER WOULD'VE SUSPECTED THAT SEWER GRATE TO LEAD ANYWHERE BUT... WELL... A ***SEWER!***

THIS IS PART OF OUR ***SANCTUARY,*** MR. BROCK.

AND THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS ***SHARE*** IT WITH SOMEONE WHO SO SELFLESSLY CAME TO THE AID OF STRANGERS.

ARE YOU CRAZY, OR JUST ***STUPID?*** HE'S ***VENOM***, A PSYCHO WITH A ***SPACE MONSTER*** FOR CLOTHES! HOW CAN YOU EVEN ***THINK*** OF SHARING OUR --

THAT'S ENOUGH, ***NATHANIEL!***

WHETHER HE STAYS ISN'T UP TO YOU ***OR*** ELIZABETH! THE ***COUNCIL*** WILL DECIDE!

AND WE'LL ***ALL*** ABIDE BY THEIR RULING!

LOOK, I'M GLAD I COULD HELP -- BUT WHO ***WERE*** THOSE GUYS?!

THEY'RE THUGS, HIRED BY ***ROLAND TREECE.*** HE'S BEEN TRYING TO DRIVE US OUT OF THIS AREA FOR ***MONTHS!***

WHY IS ANYONE'S GUESS! BUT HE SEEMS DETERMINED TO --

Shh! THAT SOUND! SOMETHING'S IN THE TUNNEL AHEAD!

WHAT THE--?

OH, LORD -- DIGGERS!

"TREECE MACHINES, WITH MORE HIRELINGS INSIDE! HE SENDS THEM INTO THE TUNNELS TO LOOK FOR US --

"-- BUT THEY'VE NEVER *FOUND* US BEFORE!"

GET BEHIND ME! WALK BACK THE WAY WE CAME!

MAYBE IF WE DON'T SEEM TO BE A *THREAT*, THEY WON'T--

GHFF!

FINALLY *GOT* ONE O' YOU SCRUFFY LEECHES!

NOW MY *DIAMOND DRILLS* ARE GONNA GUT YA LIKE A TROUT!

ACTUALLY, WE PREFER *FLOUNDER!*

CHANK

HOLY CRIPES! WH-WHAT THE DEVIL IS *THAT?!*

GHAAAA!

I DUNNO! BUT THIS *LASER CUTTER'S* REALLY MAKIN' THE STUFF ON HIS BACK *SQUIRM!*

:- SNIFF...:-

BARBECUE?

I THOUGHT WE WERE HAVING *FISH!*

NEVER MIND...

...SNACK-TIME'S *OVER!*

LET'S PLAY!

RUNCH

SMASH

TAG -- YOU'RE IT!

WHAT? TIRED ALREADY?

THEN MAYBE WE CAN HELP YOU TAKE A NICE, LONG --

NAP!

BLACK STUFF OO-OOZIN' IN THROUGH THE CRACKS!

HARLAN! H-H-HELP ME!

MAYBE THIS SOUND SHOVEL CAN --

WHOA!

SONIC BEAM'S SURE DOIN' SOME-THIN'!

LOOKS LIKE HE'S IN AGONY!

THEN HOLD 'IM DOWN! I'LL MASH THIS WISECRACKIN' SCUMBALL --

--INTO PULP!

WHU--?

HEY!

FLOOR CRUMBLIN'! WE'RE ***BOTH*** GOIN' THROUGH!

TOO DARK! C-CAN'T SEE WHERE WE'RE --

WHOONF!

HARLAN? C-CAN YA STILL *HEAR* ME?

DIGGER SUIT CUSHIONED MY IMPACT!

LOOKS LIKE THAT BLACK GOOP DID THE SAME FOR SMART-MOUTH!

BUT HE'S WOBBLY! TOO BUZZED TO FIGHT BACK!

I'M GONNA DIG THIS BUM A NEW ***NOSTRIL!***

YOU VINDICTIVE MORON! LOOK AROUND!

THIS IS BIGGER THAN YOUR PETTY ***BLOOD-LUST!***

WE DIDN'T JUST FALL THROUGH SOME ROTTED TUNNEL FLOOR--

Oh... MY... GOD!

--WE'VE FALLEN THROUGH TIME!!

NEXT MONTH >

VENOM'S NEW LIFE GETS **WEIRDER...** AND MORE **DANGEROUS!** NEW ALLIES, NEW DEADLY ENEMIES AND **SPIDER-MAN** TOO, AS **"LETHAL PROTECTOR"** CONTINUES!

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GUEST-STARRING... SPIDER-MAN®

VENOM™

LETHAL PROTECTOR

PART TWO OF SIX

+ BAGLEY DELAROSA/.

THIS ISSUE: MEET VENOM'S GREATEST ENEMIES!

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

VENOM

LETHAL PROTECTOR

PART 2 WAR AND PIECES!

SAN FRANCISCO.

SORT OF.

I--I DON'T *BELIEVE* IT! THE FREAK WITH THE LIVIN' COSTUME WAS *RIGHT!*

WE'VE FALLEN THROUGH *TIME!**

*SEE LAST ISSUE FOR DETAILS --DANNY.

DAVID MICHELINIE WRITER

MARK BAGLEY PENCILER

De La ROSA & MILGROM INKERS

MARIE JAVINS COLORIST

STARKINGS & PARKER LETTERERS

DANNY FINGEROTH EDITOR

TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

PLEASE! D-DON'T HURT HIM!

LET 'IM GO!

Huh?

THE HOMELESS PEOPLE FROM THE TUNNELS! IF *THEY'RE* HERE, THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY IN -- WHICH MEANS I'M STILL IN THE *PRESENT!*

MAN, I FEEL A LOT BETTER--

--NOW?

YOUR HESI-TATION GAVE US TIME TO RECOVER!

YOU NO LONGER FACE *EDDIE BROCK* AND A SOUND-STUNNED *SYM-BIOTE!*

NOW YOU MUST DEAL WITH--

VENOM!

OOOOO! BEING MELODRAMATIC GIVES US SUCH A *TINGLE!* WE--

Eh?

THOOM

THE SECOND DIGGER? GOOD?

NOW WE HAVE ONE FOR EACH *FIST!*

INCREDIBLE! AN ENTIRE CITY, RIGHT BELOW THE TUNNELS WE'VE BEEN EXCAVATING!

MUST BE WHAT *MR. TREECE* HAS BEEN LOOKING FOR!

MILITIA, SPLIT UP!

FLANK 'EM AND OPEN FIRE!

WHA -- A BUNCH O' GUYS WITH *ANTIQUE WEAPONS!*

THE LOCAL *POLICE?*

NO PROBLEMO!

SCZZATCH!

MURDERER!

HE WAS ONLY PROTECTING HEARTH AND HOME!

SO LET YOUR *PUNISHMENT* FIT THE CRIME!

AND SINCE YOUR *PARTNER* MADE NO ATTEMPT TO *PREVENT* THAT HEINOUS ACT --

--LET HIM *SHARE* THE JUST RETRI-BUTION!

KRISIS

Heh.

WE CAN TAKE 'IM, ETHAN!

AIM STEADY, BOYS, AND--

HO!

HE MAY LOOK LIKE A MONSTER, BUT HE'S NOT!

IN THE PARK, NEAR THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE, WE WERE ATTACKED BY TREECE'S *THUGS!*

THEY WOULD HAVE BEATEN US, MAYBE EVEN *KILLED* US, BUT --

--HE STOPPED THEM!

WE SERVE AND PROTECT, MA'AM!

DON'T LISTEN TO HER! I'VE READ ABOUT THIS GUY! HE'S A HOMICIDAL MANIAC -- NOT EVEN *HUMAN!*

THIS IS A COMPLEX QUESTION. THE *COUNCIL* WILL HAVE TO DECIDE.

ELIZABETH --

--SHOW OUR "*GUEST*" WHERE HE CAN FRESHEN UP.

THEN MEET US AT THE COUNCIL HALL.

THE -- WHAT DID YOU CALL IT, "*MILITIA*"?-- ARE KEEPING PACE.

PLEASE, DON'T BE ANGRY!

THIS SANCTUARY IS OUR WORLD, AND *GUARDING* IT IS A SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY.

I'M GONNA GO PLAY AT STEWART'S, MOM!

ALL RIGHT, TIMOTHY.

BUT--

--WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE? HOW DID IT GET HERE?

THAT, MY FRIEND, IS A RATHER *UNUSUAL* STORY...

YOU'VE SURELY HEARD OF THE BIG ***EARTH-QUAKE*** OF 1906? WELL, THIS SECTION OF OLD SAN FRANCISCO LITERALLY ***SANK*** WITH THE SETTLING OF THE EARTH'S CRUST!

IT WAS COVERED WITH RUBBLE AND DEBRIS, AND IN THE HASTE OF RECONSTRUCTION, THAT DEBRIS WAS BUILT OVER!

"WHAT WAS BENEATH IT LAY ABANDONED AND UNDISTURBED FOR DECADES, FORGOTTEN...

"... UNTIL A VAGRANT SEEKING SHELTER IN THE TUNNELS ***DISCOVERED*** IT SOME YEARS AGO. *THAT* WAS THE BEGINNING."

SINCE THEN, WE'VE DEVELOPED OUR OWN SOCIETY; WE'RE HAPPY HERE.

WE HAVE ***HOMES***, AND FREE-DOM.

BUT OUR HAVEN *MUST* BE SAFE-GUARDED AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD ***EXPLOIT*** IT.

WHICH IS WHY WE'RE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT WHO'S ALLOWED TO ***STAY.***

I'LL BE VOTING "*YES*" FOR YOU.

THANK YOU, ELIZABETH. IT'S BEEN QUITE SOME TIME SINCE WE'VE HAD A PLACE TO... ***BELONG.***

MEANWHILE, ABOVE...

I DON'T BELONG HERE!

I MEAN, BROADWAY I CAN TAKE! AND THE BOWERY, EVEN BROOKLYN--

-- BUT THIS PLACE IS SO... SO... HILLY!

Oh WELL, I THINK THE HERALD BUILDING IS THAT WAY!

WISH I COULD GO THROUGH CHANNELS AS PETER PARKER, NEW YORK NEWS PHOTOGRAPHER--

--BUT TIME IS SOMETHING I DON'T HAVE!

I'VE GOT TO FIND VENOM. EVEN IF HE MEANT IT WHEN HE SAID HE'D TAKE ME OFF HIS PERSONAL "MOST WANTED" LIST...

...THERE'S ANOTHER, MORE IMPORTANT REASON.

I JUST DON'T FEEL RIGHT LETTING AN INSANE, CONVICTED KILLER RUN FREE!

I MEAN, I KNOW I CAN'T CAPTURE EVERY CRIMINAL IN THE WORLD--

--BUT THIS IS A GUY WHOSE EVERY ACTION SEEMS TO END UP WITH SOMEONE DEAD...

...AND WHOSE ORIGIN IS SO CLOSELY RELATED TO ME, THAT--

--Whoop!

GOTTA BE CARE-FUL...

MORGUE

...CONCENTRATE ON WHAT I'M *HERE* FOR!

IN NEW YORK, I GOT A LINE ON VENOM BY LOOKING INTO EDDIE BROCK'S ***PAST!*** * SO MAYBE BY CROSS-CHECKING THE LOCAL PAPER'S REFERENCE FILES, I CAN --

* IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #375. -- DANNY

-- WELL, WHADDAYA KNOW?

CARL BROCK

"DAD!"

BUT I SWEAR, IF THE OLD GUY GREETS ME WITH "*I WANT TO EAT YOUR BRAIN*"--

-- I'M GOIN' HOME!

ELSEWHERE...

YOU... YOU WANT ME TO... GO?

THE VOTE WAS CLOSE, MR. BROCK, BUT MAJORITY RULES.

I'M AFRAID I HAVE TO ASK YOU TO *LEAVE* IMMEDIATELY!

WE SPOKE UP FOR YA, SON! TOLD 'EM WHAT YA DID FOR US!

TOLD 'EM HOW YA *HELPED*...!

THE DEVIL *HIMSELF* CAN ACT LIKE AN ANGEL, IF IT GETS *HIM* WHAT *HE* WANTS!

AND THIS *THING* BEFORE US IS NO LESS A DEMON!

MY CONGREGATION WILL *NEVER* ALLOW SUCH AN ABOMINATION TO FOUL OUR FAIR COMMUNITY!

HOW 'BOUT WE JUST *KILL* THE SUCKER?

ENOUGH!

BAM

YOU'VE *HAD* YOUR SAY, REVEREND RAKE-STRAW!

NOW WE'LL *ALL* ABIDE BY THE COUNCIL'S DECISION -- AND NO MORE!

YOU'RE A POWERFUL... *ENTITY*, MR. BROCK. YOU COULD PROBABLY DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.

BUT WE HOPE YOU'LL RESPECT OUR WAY OF LIFE --

--AND THAT YOU'LL KEEP OUR *SECRETS*.

OF COURSE.

THE BIBLE SAYS TO TURN THE OTHER CHEEK...

JUST ASK THE GOOD *REVEREND!*

MORNING IN UNION SQUARE, AFTER A TROUBLED NIGHT OF WANDERING...

STILL NO ANSWERS, AND NOWHERE TO GO.

WE'RE AS ROOTLESS AS THOSE UNDERGROUNDERS, *BEFORE* THEY FOUND THEIR HAVEN.

IT'S IRONIC: *THEY'RE* IN DANGER OF *LOSING* THEIR SANCTUARY, WHILE *WE* -- WAIT!

THEY MENTIONED A NAME -- *ROLAND TREECE!* HE'S THE MAN WHO'S HARASSING THEM!

IF WE COULD FIND OUT WHY, MAYBE *STOP* THE THREAT, EVEN THAT ONE-EYED PREACHER WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT US!

YESSSS!

HEY, TOMMY! WH-WHAT'S THAT GUY DOIN'?!

GEEZ, AUTUMN, TH-THAT'S NO "GUY..."

THAT'S --

PLA

VENOM!

AT THAT SAME MOMENT, IN ONE OF SAN FRANCISCO'S BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS...

YEP.

THIS IS THE ADDRESS I GOT FROM THE *HERALD* FILES, ALL RIGHT!

TOK TOK

YES?

GOOD MORNING! DO I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF ADDRESSING *CARL BROCK?*

YES.

EDDIE BROCK'S *FATHER?*

SLAM

OOOO-KAY..!

WHILE, ACROSS TOWN, AT THE REGIONAL HEAD-QUARTERS OF TREECE INTERNATIONAL--

-- ANOTHER WOULD-BE VISITOR ALSO HAS TROUBLE GAINING ENTRY.

THOUGH IN HIS CASE, THE SOLUTION IS SOME-WHAT --

-- SIMPLER!

RRNCH

Oh? INFRARED TRIP BEAMS? WELL THEN, WHY DON'T --

-- YOU HANDLE IT?

SLAK

THAT'S BETTER! NO NEED TO ALARM OUR HOST, Eh?

WE'LL JUST MOSEY AROUND--

--DELICIOUS WORD, 'MOSEY--"

--UNTIL WE FIND SOMETHING USEFUL!

Ah! THIS LOOKS PROMISING!

A SCALE MODEL OF THE *PARK* OVER THE UNDERGROUND CITY!

WE'D BETTER SEE WHAT THOSE BROCHURES SAY!

Hmm, TREECE IS FINANCING THE RENOVATION OF THE PARK AS A *GIFT* TO SAN FRANCISCO?

BUT WHAT THREAT COULD THOSE UNDERGROUNDERS POSE TO A *CHARITY* PROJECT? OBVIOUSLY THERE'S MORE TO THIS --

"--THAN MEETS THE *EYE!*"

HOLY GEEZ--! GET A *SECURITY TEAM* TO PRESENTATION ROOM SIX!

AND DON'T SPARE THE *FIREPOWER!*

THERE HE IS!

TRAIL O' SLIME LED RIGHT TO 'IM!

WE DON'T KNOW IF YOUR EMPLOYER IS *TRULY* EVIL!

THEREFORE, IT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY TO *KILL* YOU.

YOU MAY *LEAVE.*

CHAKATAKATAKATAKATAKATAK

THP

THP

THP

HNFG

KEESH

BOSS IS GONNA BE TICKED AT THE DAMAGE TO HIS DISPLAY, BUT HE'LL UNDERSTAND ONCE WE -- Huh? TH-THIS GUY'S STILL *MOVIN?!*

AMMUNITION IS EXPENSIVE! HERE, WHY DON'T YOU USE YOURS--

--*AGAIN?!*

TH-THAT BLACK STUFF ***CAUGHT*** THE BULLETS! P-POPPIN' 'EM BACK OUT!

NOW IT'S **OUR** TURN!

REPRISE: A STATELY HOME IN A PROPER NEIGHBORHOOD--

--WHERE A GRANITE-FACED MAN GRUMBLES AS HE NEARS THE ENTRANCE TO AN UPSTAIRS STUDY.

WHY MUST THE WORLD CONTINUALLY INTRUDE? WHY CAN'T PEOPLE JUST LEAVE HIM **ALONE**...?

MR. BROCK?

WHA--?

WE HAVE TO TALK!

BUT AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF TREECE INTERNATIONAL--

--ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!

BYE-BYE!

MORE GUARDS?

HOW DELIGHTFUL!

BUT WE REALLY THINK WE'VE HAD ENOUGH FUN FOR ONE DAY!

PERHAPS WE'LL COME BACK AND PLAY AGAIN SOME OTHER TIME! IN FACT--

KRISH

-- WE CAN PRACTICALLY GUARANTEE IT!

WHILE, AMONG THE POLICE AND MEDIA VEHICLES THAT HAVE GATHERED BELOW...

TARGET IN SIGHT!

TRACKING PROCEDURES INITIATED! SQUAD--

--CONVERGE ON MY COORDINATES!

YES, THE PUZZLE DOES REMAIN VAGUE--

-- BUT AT LEAST WE HAVE A FEW MORE *PIECES!*

TREECE IS UP TO NO GOOD, THAT MUCH IS CERTAIN! WE NEED TO DISCOVER HIS HIDDEN *MOTIVES!* AND THEN WE CAN SQUASH HIM LIKE... LIKE...

...A *SPIDER!*

THAT'S HIM!

DO IT!

WHAT--

UNNHHH--!

S-SOME SORT... OF ENERGY! H-HIT US...WHEN WE WEREN'T READY...!

YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW, EDDIE-- THIS GAME HAS NO RULES!

WHO... WHO ARE YOU?

MY NAME IS ORWELL TAYLOR AND I'M HERE TO TEACH YOU THE CONCEPT OF TAKING RESPONSI-BILITY FOR ONE'S ACTIONS!

YOU SEE, EDDIE, A WHILE BACK...

...YOU KILLED MY SON!

NOW...

...WE--THE JURY--ARE GOING TO KILL YOU!

NEXT ISSUE: VENOM VERSUS THE JURY! ROLAND TREECE MAKES HIS MOVE! PLUS: THE CHILDHOOD OF EDDIE BROCK! (OH, YEAH--SPIDEY'LL BE HERE, TOO!) DON'T MISS IT!

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INSIDE: SPIDER-MAN.!

VENOM™

LETHAL PROTECTOR

VENOM™
HANDS DOWN
A VERDICT ON
THE JURY!

BAGLEY/DELAROSA

STAN LEE PRESENTS: VENOM

LETHAL PROTECTOR

PART 3

A VERDICT OF VIOLENCE

SAN FRANCISCO: WHERE A SUDDEN SHOCK OF SOUND --

--RIPS VENOM TO THE CORE!

DAVID MICHELINIE WRITER & MARK BAGLEY PENCILLER & DeLaROSA & MILGROM INKERS & MARIE JAVINS COLORIST & RICHARD STARKINGS LETTERER & DANNY FINGEROTH EDITOR

TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

WH... WH-WHO *ARE* YOU?

I'M *ORWELL TAYLOR*, MR. BROCK, A MAN OF VAST RESOURCES -- *MOST* OF WHICH HAVE LATELY BEEN FOCUSED ON DISCOVERING EVERYTHING I CAN ABOUT *YOU!*

B-BUT, WHY..?

LIKE HOW THE ALIEN *SYMBIOTE* YOU WEAR IS VULNERABLE ONLY TO FIRE... AND *SOUND!*

I HAD A SON -- *HUGH.* FRESH OUT OF THE ARMY, HE BECAME A GUARD AT THE FEDERAL PRISON CALLED *THE VAULT.*

HE WAS THE FIRST MAN YOU *KILLED* WHEN YOU *ESCAPED* FROM THAT INSTITUTION!*

* IN *AMAZING SPIDER-MAN* #315.--DANNY

WE... WE DIDN'T *WANT* TO HURT ANYONE..!

AND THAT MAKES IT *ALL RIGHT?!* YOU *MURDERED* MY SON! THAT'S WHY I PUT TOGETHER *"THE JURY!"*

THESE WARRIORS -- INCLUDING THE EX-*GUARDSMAN* WHO HOLDS YOU HELPLESS -- WERE HUGH'S FRIENDS IN THE MILITARY. BUT NOW THEIR SOLE PURPOSE, LIKE MY OWN --

--IS TO SPILL YOUR BLOOD!

SCREECH?

YES, SIR?

ADJUST YOUR SONIC GUNS TO "KILL!"

YES, SIR!

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR--

--Huh?

HEY--!

THAT LONG-WINDED EXPLANATION ALLOWED US TO *RECOVER* FROM YOUR INITIAL ATTACK!

HURTING US A *SECOND* TIME WON'T BE SO *EASY!*

FIREARM! *BURN* HIM!

HOT STUFF.

KREESH

CHILL OUT!

HE'S FASTER THAN ANTICIPATED, SIR! WE'LL HAVE TO RECALIBRATE OUR WEAPONS!

DON'T GIVE ME EXCUSES!

GIVE ME HIS HEAD!

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT: HE'S RUTHLESS, VICIOUS, A DRIVEN MAN!

TOO BAD. UNDER OTHER CIRCUM-STANCES...

...WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN FRIENDS!

NOT A VERY *FRIENDLY* THING TO DO!

TREECE INTERNATIONAL; DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO.

BREAKING AND ENTERING, DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY... THIS "*VENOM*" COULD PROVE TO BE A *PROBLEM!*

A *BIG* ONE, MR. TREECE! HE PUT HALF MY SECURITY TEAM IN THE HOSPITAL!

NOT BEFORE THE DISPLAY MODEL OF MY PARK RENOVATION PLAN WAS *RUINED!* BLAST IT, CRANE, I THOUGHT YOUR MEN WERE THE *BEST!*

THEY ARE!

AT LEAST THEY PUT HIM THROUGH A WINDOW BEFORE HE DID *TOO* MUCH DAMAGE.

TRUE.

AND BEFORE HE LEARNED THE *REAL* PURPOSE OF THE PARK PROJECT! BUT...

AGAINST ANYTHING *HUMAN..!*

"... WHAT IF THERE'S A *NEXT* TIME?

NEXT TIME, TRY THE *DOOR!*

A FASHIONABLE NEIGHBORHOOD, MILES AWAY.

SORRY, MR. BROCK, BUT I NEED INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR *SON!*

YOU WEAR A MASK, COME IN THROUGH THE WINDOW--

--THEN EXPECT ME TO SIT DOWN AND *CHAT?*

I'VE ONLY *THIS* TO SAY TO YOU:

WHATEVER RELATIONSHIP EXISTED BETWEEN *EDWARD BROCK* AND MYSELF IS NO LONGER APPLICABLE. Oh, YES, THERE'S ONE OTHER THING:

LEAVE!

OR I'LL HAVE THE POLICE REMOVE YOU!

Oh, SWELL! *NOW* WHAT? I'M NO STRONG-ARM GOON!

CAN'T JUST *BEAT* IT OUT OF HIM!

BUT HOW'M I GOING TO FIND VENOM IF I DON'T GET HELP FROM *SOMEWHERE?*

Er, MR. SPIDER-MAN?

I'M *SHARON DEMPSY.* I'VE BEEN A HOUSEKEEPER FOR CARL BROCK SINCE BEFORE EDWARD WAS BORN. I'D BE *FIRED* IF SIR FOUND OUT, BUT IF IT WILL HELP POOR EDDIE --

-- *I'LL* TELL YOU WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW!

THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE.

I KNOW, I *KNOW!*

RUNNING FROM *THE JURY* DOES SEEM A COWARDLY ACT.

BUT WE *DID* KILL HUGH TAYLOR, AFTER ALL!

IT WAS A REGRETTABLE *NECESSITY*, PART OF OUR QUEST TO DESTROY *SPIDER-MAN!* STILL...

... THE ELDER TAYLOR'S GRIEF IS VALID.

BUT WE HAVE TO *IGNORE* THAT FOR NOW! THE INNOCENT PEOPLE IN THAT CITY BENEATH THE PARK *NEED* US! ROLAND TREECE HAS BEEN HUNTING THEM DOWN!

A STRANGE WAY TO "*RENOVATE*" ANY-THING!

IF WE COULD DISCOVER HIS HIDDEN AGENDA, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO STOP HIS--

--ATTACKS?

SWASH

PERSISTENT FELLOWS, AREN'T YOU?

AND THOSE CUTE LITTLE *DISCS* YOU'VE ADDED TO YOUR FEET MUST KEEP YOU *AIRBORNE!*

FOR THE *MOMENT..!*

Ah-Ah-Ah! WE FELT YOUR *HEAT* LONG BEFORE YOU GOT HERE!

MISSED!

SENTRY!

ON IT, FIREARM!

KWOOSH

--TRAFFIC!

SKREEE

KRANG

WHAT THE --?! TRAILER PULLIN' RIGHT! SWERVIN' ME STRAIGHT INTO --

SENTRY'S CLEAR, BUT THE TARGET'S STILL INSIDE!

CAN YOU TAKE 'IM, BOMBLAST?

JUST WATCH ME!

EAT PLASMA BOLTS, YOU LIP-SMACKIN' LUNATIC!

THIS SOON BEFORE LUNCH? MERCIFUL HEAVENS--

--THAT WOULD SIMPLY RUIN OUR APPETITE!

BUT, PERHAPS, IF WE HAD A LITTLE EXERCISE FIRST...

BWAK

BATTERING PULSE CAUGHT HIM BY SURPRISE!

KEEP 'IM DOWN, RAMSHOT! I'LL --

--TAKE HIM APART!

NOT SO FAST, SCREECH!

LEAVE ME A PIECE!

NO SWEAT, PAL! THERE'S ENOUGH FOR US--

"--BOTH!"

THAT'S ONE WEAPON THAT LONE MANIAC WILL NEVER HAVE --

TEAMWORK! C'MON, LET'S FINISH THE --

--JOB? HEY, WHERE'D HE GO?

I-I SAW, BUT I DON'T *UNDERSTAND!* ONE SECOND HE WAS HERE --

--AN' THE NEXT, HE STARTED TO *FADE!* BLENDED RIGHT IN WITH THE CONCRETE! H-HE JUST...

...DIS-APPEARED!

USED THE BLASTED *ALIEN* TO CAMOUFLAGE 'IM!

WHAT NOW-- SEARCH AND DESTROY?

NO! EMERGENCY CREWS'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE!

THERE'LL BE *ANOTHER* TIME!

YEAH... AND *SOON!*

ARE WE GONNA BE ON TV, DAD?

Oh, LORD, WHAT WOULD THE *NEIGH-BORS* THINK?

LET'S GET BACK IN THE CAR, TIMMY. I -- I THINK IT'S BEST --

--IF WE KEPT A *LOW PROFILE!*

MISTER BROCK KEEPS A LOW PROFILE IN *MOST* THINGS, SPIDER-MAN.

HE'S NOT TERRIBLY *EMOTIONAL*. IN FACT, I DOUBT ANYONE WAS MORE SURPRISED THAN HE WAS --

--THE DAY HE FELL IN *LOVE!*

"*JAMIE* BECAME HIS WIFE, AND HIS WORLD. HE WANTED HER TO HAVE EVERYTHING THAT WOULD MAKE HER HAPPY --

"--AND WHAT SHE WANTED MOST WAS A *FAMILY.*

"BUT WHEN SHE *DIED* GIVING BIRTH TO *EDDIE*, THAT PART OF CARL THAT ALLOWED HIM TO CARE FOR ANOTHER PERSON DIED, TOO.

"NOT THAT HE WAS CRUEL OR ABUSIVE; HE SAW THAT HIS SON GOT THE BEST EDUCATION, THE FINEST HEALTH CARE, THE LATEST TOYS.

"BUT WHAT THE CHILD *REALLY* NEEDED WAS THE ONE THING CARL BROCK COULD NO LONGER GIVE: *AFFECTION.*

"IN SCHOOL, THE BOY WORKED HARD. BUT HIS REWARD FOR PERFECT MARKS WAS A TERSE --

--THAT'S NICE EDWARD. NOW, WHY DON'T YOU GO OUT AND PLAY?

"HE EXCELLED IN SPORTS, HOPING THAT TROPHIES AND MEDALS WOULD DO THE TRICK.

"THEY *DIDN'T.*

"THEN, IN COLLEGE, THE *WATER-GATE* SCANDAL ERUPTED, AND EDDIE SWITCHED HIS MAJOR TO JOUR-NALISM.

25¢ DAILY BUGLE
WATERGATE COVER-UP REACHES NIXON!
JAWORSKI INDICT PR

"ON GRADUATING, HE MOVED TO NEW YORK, GOT A JOB AT THE *DAILY GLOBE*, AND BECAME A CRUSADING REPORTER.

"SURELY, HE FELT, HIS FATHER WOULD RESPECT *THAT.*

"BUT EVEN AT THE PEAK OF HIS CAREER, WHEN HE WAS WRITING EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS WITH A CONFESSED *SERIAL KILLER*, WORD FROM CARL WAS RARE, AND PERFUNCTORY.

"THEN, WHEN EDDIE'S *SOURCE* WAS EXPOSED AS NOTHING BUT A *PRANKSTER*, EDDIE WAS FIRED IN DISGRACE...

"...AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FATHER AND SON CEASED ALTOGETHER!"

MORE THAN ANY-THING ELSE, I THINK THAT PUSHED POOR EDDIE TOWARD MADNESS: HE SOUGHT HIS FATHER'S LOVE --

-- BUT BROUGHT HIM ONLY *SHAME.*

THANKS, MS. DEMPSY. YOU'VE BEEN A BIG HELP.

I WISH I COULD BELIEVE THAT.

BUT I DON'T KNOW IF ANYTHING SHE TOLD ME WILL ACTUALLY HELP ME FIND *VENOM!*

STILL, LIKE THE OLD SAYING GOES --

"--KNOW YOUR ENEMY!" PROBLEM IS, I MAY BE GETTING TO KNOW EDDIE TOO ***WELL***! I HONESTLY FEEL A LITTLE ***SORRY*** FOR HIM!

AND IS THAT WISE, HAVING SYMPATHY FOR A MAN WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE IN LIFE --

--IS TO ***KILL*** ME?!

BUT POLICE ADMIT THAT THOSE INVOLVED IN THE BIZARRE BATTLE-- VENOM, AND THE MYSTERIOUS ARMORED WARRIORS -- ARE STILL AT LARGE.

THE TREECE BUILDING.

--THAT NO ONE HAS BEEN KILLED SO FAR.

OBVIOUSLY, THIS STORY IS FAR FROM OVER!

THAT'S WHAT ***CONCERNS*** ME! WITH VENOM STILL ON THE LOOSE, HE REMAINS A THREAT TO MY PARK RENOVATION PLAN --

--AND TO THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN ***GOLD*** IT REPRESENTS!

I GUESS WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO THIS THE ***HARD*** WAY!

THAT WAS EASIER THAN WE EXPECTED--

CLEMENT STREET, SOUTH OF THE GOLDEN GATE.

--THOUGH THE FACT THAT WE ARE NOW PURSUED DOES COMPLICATE MATTERS!

STILL, SAN FRANCISCO'S A BIG PLACE. IF WE ADOPT A MORE CONVENTIONAL APPEARANCE--

--MINGLE WITH THE CIVILIAN POPULACE--WE SHOULD BE FINE. AFTER ALL, TAYLOR'S MEN CAN'T BE--

"--EVERYWHERE!"

THIS IS WATCHPOST 73! TARGET SIGHTED, GOIN' EAST ON CLEMENT!

GET THE TEAM HERE FAST! I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO MAKE SURE BROCK--

"--STICKS AROUND!"

Hnh--?

POIK

YYYAAHHAAAGGHH!

SKREEEE

SONIC GRENADE PUT THE HURT ON YOUR ALIEN BUDDY! BUT THESE BULLETS--

--ARE FOR YOU!

Wh-why...?

WHY?! HUGH TAYLOR WAS ONE OF THE FINEST MEN I'VE EVER KNOWN!

AND TO AVENGE HIM, YOU'D CONDEMN MANY TO DEATH?

HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

A COLONY OF INNOCENT STREET PEOPLE IS IN DANGER--

--AND WE COULD BE THEIR ONLY SAL-VATION!

WE SEE HESITATION IN YOUR EYES! TENSION EASING IN YOUR TRIGGER FINGER! NOT MUCH, BUT--

UNLESS YOU STOP US!

--ENOUGH!

THOSE SECONDS ALLOWED US TO *RECOVER* FROM THE GRENADE!

WE SHOULD KILL YOU, BUT YOUR INSTANT OF *COMPASSION* HAS BOUGHT YOU YOUR LIFE! NOW GO, BEFORE--

WROK

SENTRY!

BUT WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?

WE WERE SPREAD OUT ACROSS THE CITY, LOOKING FOR VENOM! THEY'LL BE ALONG SOON!

MEANWHILE--

--MY REPULSOR RAYS SHOULD HOLD HIM DOWN UNTIL--

CHOONT

WHAM

hng

SOME-ONE'S SHOOTING AT SOME-ONE...

...BESIDES US?!

COME ABOARD, Mr. BROCK! I OFFER SANCTUARY...

...AND A PROPOSITION!

YES, I KNOW IT'S A TRAP! BUT WHAT CHOICE DO WE HAVE? THE JURY WILL BE HERE ANY MOMENT! BESIDES...

...THIS COULD BE ENLIGHTENING!

PLP

VERY WELL, WE'RE HERE! WHAT DO YOU WANT?

GOOD AFTERNOON, Mr. BROCK. I'M--

--ROLAND TREECE! I'VE DECIDED IT WOULD BE BETTER TO HAVE YOU WITH ME THAN AGAINST ME!

THEREFORE, I'D LIKE TO HIRE YOU--

--AS MY NEW HEAD OF SECURITY!

Hmm. DOES THE POSITION COVER YOUR PARK RENOVATION PROJECT?

IT DOES.

'KAY!

AND, SOME TIME LATER, IN THE MOJAVE DESERT...

THAT'S THE PLACE, SIR!

Mr. TREECE SAID YOU'RE TO MEET HIM INSIDE THE BUNKER

AFTER YOU.

BUT--

WE INSIST!

HEY, C'MON! I-I'M JUST A HIRED HAND!

YOU DON'T THINK I'D TRY TO *TRICK* YOU, DO YA?

AS LONG AS WE CAN SQUEEZE YOUR NECK, POP YOUR HEAD OFF LIKE A CLIPPED FLOWER?

NO.

BUT WE'VE SUFFERED TOO MUCH HUMAN PERFIDY TO BE TRUSTING. IN FACT, THE ONLY REASON WE CAME *WITH* YOU--

--WAS TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO TREECE TO PREVENT ANY *FURTHER* TREACHER--

--RRR

WALLS OF FLAME PENNING US IN!

WHEN WE GET HOLD OF TREECE--!

OH, DON'T BLAME ROLAND, DEAR BOY--

--THIS WAS MY IDEA! I'M CARLTON DRAKE, HEAD OF THE LIFE FOUNDATION.

I ARRANGED THIS "WELCOME" WHEN Mr. TREECE--ONE OF OUR BOARD MEMBERS--SUGGESTED YOU MIGHT BE OF USE IN THE FOUNDATION'S LATEST VENTURE!

HE'S A FOOL! WE'LL NEVER HELP DECEITFUL SCUM LIKE YOU!

Ah, BUT IT ISN'T YOU WE WANT, DEAR FELLOW! IT'S...

...YOUR CHILDREN!

NEXT:

VENOM HELD CAPTIVE!

SPIDEY ON THE ATTACK!

AND..... COULD IT BE--?

A NEW ALIEN SYMBIOTE!!

BETTER BUY ASBESTOS GLOVES FOR THIS ONE, VENOMITES--

IT'S GONNA BE HOT!

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PART FOUR OF SIX

VENOM™

LETHAL PROTECTOR

BAGLEY PANOSIAN

INSIDE: YOU--AND VENOM™ & SPIDER-MAN® WILL CONFRONT THE FIRST FEMALE SYMBIOTE!!

A SECRET INSTALL-ATION DEEP IN THE MOJAVE DESERT.

YOU! CARLTON DRAKE!

COME CLOSER...

...SO WE CAN SUCK YOUR *LUNGS* OUT THROUGH YOUR *NOSE!*

VERY COLORFUL, MISTER BROCK-- OR SHOULD I SAY, "*VENOM?*"

BUT THE *LIFE FOUNDATION* PREFERS ME INTACT!

OUR CLIENTS PAY HANDSOMELY FOR THE EMERGENCY CONDOS WE PROVIDE IN THE EVENT OF WORLD CHAOS -- *SURVIVALISM* WITH-OUT THE *FUSS*, SO TO SPEAK.

AND THEY EXPECT TO BE *PROTECTED* IN THAT SHELTERED ENVIRONMENT--

-- WHICH IS WHERE *YOU* COME IN!

PROCEED.

TAK

NO! NOT *AGAIN!* THAT BEAM, PIERCING THE SONIC CAGE!

P-PULLING AT US! IT... I-IT --

Stan Lee PRESENTS: VENOM: LETHAL PROTECTOR

PART 4

DEADLY BARF!

AAAHG

DAVID MICHELINIE WRITER
RON LIM BREAKDOWNS
SAM DELAROSA AND
AL MILGROM FINISHES
RICHARD STARKINGS LETTERS
MARIE JAVINS COLORS
DANNY FINGEROTH EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

WHEN WE HEARD OF THE INCREDIBLY POWERFUL CREATURE CALLED *CARNAGE*, WE DID SOME *RESEARCH* --

--AND FOUND THAT HE GOT HIS ABILITIES FROM A ***SPAWN*** OF THE ALIEN SYMBIOTE YOU WEAR AS A COSTUME!

WE THOUGHT THAT IF WE COULD OBTAIN AND CONTROL *OTHER* SPAWN, COMBINE THEM WITH VOLUNTEER SECURITY PERSONNEL --

-- WE'D HAVE THE PERFECT *GUARDIANS* FOR OUR PAMPERED, WELL-PAYING CLIENTELE.

AND THIS IS THE FIFTH AND FINAL "*SEED*" OUR SCIENTISTS DETERMINED YOU POSSESS.

IF ONE HAD A TASTE FOR THE MELO-DRAMATIC, ONE MIGHT CALL IT...

...THE LAST SON OF VENOM!

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, WHERE AN ALL-HOURS CONVENIENCE STORE HAS JUST BEEN ROBBED.

A FACT THAT HAS NOT ESCAPED THE NOTICE OF A PASSING CHiPS CRUISER.

YA WANT THE *SILVER*, MAN, YA GOTTA TAKE SOME *LEAD* WITH IT!

BDAM BDAM

-- Muh HEART, Muh ♫ ACHY-BREAKY-- Huh?!

A JOGGER! LOOK OUT--!

?

SKREEECH

WE OUGHTA GIVE THAT BONEHEAD IN THE SHORTS A CUT O' THE *TAKE!*

YEAH, WE'RE HOME FREE!

THOMP!

WHU--?

HIM?

I-IT *CAN'T* BE--!

BOO!

OKAY, SO MAYBE I SHOULD LEAVE THE *SPOOKY* STUFF TO *GHOST RIDER!*

THWIP

BUT WEBBING UP THIS WINDSHIELD IS PURE *SPIDEY!*

AND IT SLOWED 'EM DOWN ENOUGH--

...SO THEY WON'T HIT THAT TREE *TOO* HARD!

WHNCH

WEEOOO WEEOOO WEE OOO

THIS MAY BE A SILLY QUESTION, AFTER WHAT YOU JUST DID, BUT ARE YOU THE *REAL* SPIDER-MAN?

I DON'T HAVE A ***DRIVER'S LICENSE*** TO SHOW YOU BUT, YEP -- I'M ME!

WOW. WE SINCERELY APPRECIATE YOUR *HELP*, SIR...

...IF THERE'S *ANYTHING* WE CAN DO IN *RETURN*--

Uh, WELL, NOW THAT YOU *MENTION* IT...

...COULD YOU LOAN ME A *QUARTER*?

SOON...

SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR AEROBICS, MARY JANE--

-- BUT I JUST WANTED TO TOUCH BASE... AND SAY I *MISS* YOU.

I MISS YOU, TOO, HON. WHEN ARE YOU COMING BACK TO NEW YORK?

SOON, I HOPE. I HAVEN'T TRACKED **VENOM** DOWN YET, BUT I HAVE A NEW LEAD -- WEIRD CREATURES HAVE BEEN SEEN AROUND HERE LATELY!

FROM DESCRIPTIONS, THEY COULD BE ***SYMBIOTES***, LIKE VENOM'S "OTHER"!

ONE'S BEEN ATTACKING PUBLIC PLACES, CONFRONTING POLICE -- ALMOST LIKE IT WAS ***TESTING*** ITSELF!

THERE'S ONLY ONE GATHERING PLACE IT HASN'T HIT -- A NEW ***MALL*** NEAR SALINAS!

I'M HEADED THERE NOW, BUT DON'T WORRY -- I'LL BE HOME SAFE AND SOUND IN NO TIME!

SURE, PETER.

'BYE.

THE DESERT...

I KNOW. THIS IS FRUSTRATING, HUMILIATING--

--FOR US BOTH!

THE SOUND WALL IS SOLID, STRONG. BUT IT'S EVEN WORSE FOR YOU, MY "OTHER."

TRYING TO *FORCE* OUR WAY THROUGH CAUSES YOU *AGONY*, PAIN SO INTENSE THAT *I* FEEL IT AS WELL!

I'M ALMOST GLAD MY *FATHER* AND I ARE ES-TRANGED.

I DEVELOPED MY MUSCLES TO *IMPRESS* HIM! BUT EVEN WITH YOUR ALIEN POWER, WE'RE HELPLESS. FATHER WOULD BE *ASHAMED* OF ME...

...AGAIN.

Hnh? WHAT'S THAT? YOU SAY I SHOULD TRY MY *OWN* STRENGTH --

-- *ALONE?* OF COURSE! SONICS DON'T HURT OUR *HUMAN* HALF! AND THAT COULD MEAN...

YESSSSSS!

NEAR SALINAS...

THERE'S THE MALL! BUT IS IT THE NEXT TARGET?

Ah! A CLUE!

KREEE SKH

Oh MAN! THIS PLACE IS IN PIECES!

I SHOULD'VE GOTTEN HERE SOONER!

HEEELLLP!!

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE I'M HERE JUST IN TIME!

BE COOL, LADY! EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE FINE!

WHO'RE YOU KIDDIN', PAL? EVEN IF YOU REALLY WERE SPIDER-MAN, YOU WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST--

--THAT!

WELL, WELL! AN HONEST-TO-GOODNESS *SUPER-HERO*? PERFECT!

BREAKING YOU IN HALF WILL MAKE OUR LITTLE EXERCISE A *COMPLETE* SUCCESS!

AW, NO! SOMEONE WITH A LIVING COSTUME... WHO WANTS TO *KILL* ME?!

IT'S *DÉJÀ VU* ALL OVER *AGAIN!*

WHILE BENEATH THE MOJAVE...

I KNOW YOU'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE, MISTER BROCK, BUT I STILL FIND IT *FASCINATING!*

IT WASN'T EASY DEVISING A WAY TO ACCELERATE THE *MATURATION* OF YOUR SYMBIOTE SEED, BUT WE PREVAILED!

AND THE *OTHER* SPAWN HAVE ALREADY BEEN MATCHED WITH TOP SECURITY PERSONNEL --

-- SENT OUT TO CONFRONT THE *POLICE*, TO TEST THEIR POWERS AND DETERMINE IF THEY WILL TRULY MAKE CAPABLE PROTECTORS.

AND, IF THEIR SUCCESS TO DATE IS ANY INDICATION, *THIS* ONE SHOULD BE JUST AS--

EYAWK!

--Eh?!

I-- I DON'T *GET* IT! THAT CAGE SHOULD *HOLD* A NORMAL *HUMAN!*

YOU *IDIOT!* BROCK HAS **OLYMPIC-LEVEL** STRENGTH! YOU SET THE DECIBELS TOO ***LOW!***

H-HE SLAMMED RICARDO INTO THE CONTROLS!

THEY'RE SHORTIN' OUT! THE MONSTER'S--

FREE!

INDEED! FREE--

--FURIOUS--

--AND VERY, VERY HUNGRY!

PERHAPS WE'LL SMASH ALL OF YOUR *MASKS* FIRST! YES!

THAT SHOULD MAKE IT MUCH EASIER TO DECIDE--

--WHOSE *FACE* WE WANT TO *EAT* *FIRST!*

WHHAGHH!

HAVING *PORTABLE* SONIC WEAPONS AVAILABLE WAS A WISE PRECAUTION! ACTIVATE THE *AUXILIARY* SOUND CAGE!

AND SEE THAT THE DECIBEL DENSITY IS AT A *SAFE* LEVEL THIS TIME!

THOUGH I BEGIN TO WONDER, NOW THAT WE HAVE THE LAST SPAWN--

--IF WE *REALLY* NEED MISTER BROCK *ALIVE* AT ALL!

INTERLUDE: A HIDDEN CITY BENEATH SAN FRANCISCO, LOST SINCE THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1906...

...AND NOW HOME TO A SOCIETY OF OUTCASTS.

I WAS HOPING WE'D SEE MISTER BROCK UP ABOVE, MOM.

I KNOW, TIMOTHY. IT'S A SHAME THE COUNCIL REFUSED HIM SANCTUARY.

HE WAS A FRIEND.

C'MON, ELIZABETH, YOU SHOULD BE USING VENOM STORIES TO *SCARE* YOUR BOY INTO DOING HIS *CHORES*.

THAT PSYCHO'S A *MONSTER*, NOT SOME "FRIENDLY GHOST!"

AND YOU'RE A *FOOL*, NATHANIEL! HAVE YOU *FORGOTTEN* HOW VENOM *PROTECTED* US *ALL* FROM ROLAND TREECE'S *DIGGERS*?!

WHAT IF THEY COME *BACK*?

IF THEY DO, MY CHILD, *GOD* WILL PROVIDE.

I *PRAY* THAT HE *DOES*, REVEREND RAKESTRAW. BECAUSE IF THOSE MECHANICAL DEMONS *DO* RETURN--

--*PRAYER* WILL BE ALL WE *HAVE*!

THAT CLINCHES IT! THIS *HAS* TO BE *ANOTHER* SYMBIOTE!

IT DOESN'T TRIGGER MY *SPIDER-SENSE* ANY MORE THAN VENOM OR CARNAGE DO!

BUT THE WOMAN *INSIDE* IS NEW AT THIS --

--AND THAT GIVES *ME* AN EDGE!

NORMALLY, I WOULDN'T HIT A "*LADY*" IN THE BACK!

BUT WHEN SHE'S TRYING TO *KILL* ME, I MAKE AN *EXCEPTION!*

NUTS! ALIEN COSTUME HELPED HER TAKE THE PUNCH!

SHE'S RECOVERING ALREADY! MAYBE SOME *WEBBING...!*

THWIP

Whoop! SHE'S FAST!

REAL FAST!

SPEEH

TURNING TAIL *ALREADY?!* THIS IS GOING TO BE *EASIER* THAN I *THOUGHT!*

Uh-*HUH.* JUST *KEEP* THINKING THAT..!

AN *EXPERIENCED* FIGHTER WOULDN'T UNDERESTIMATE HER OPPONENT!

"WOULDN'T RUSH UP AT ME, TAKE WILD CHANCES!"

WOULDN'T FALL INTO A *TRAP!*

WHOONF!

I'M IN *TROUBLE!*

STRIKE AGENT FOUR, REQUESTING EMERGENCY EVACUATION!

NOW TO KEEP THAT WEB-SLINGER OFF MY BACK!

H-HEY!

!NO! I-I'M HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THAT WINDOW!

FOR IT, MAYBE--

--BUT NOT THROUGH IT!

Whew!

NOW FOR--

Huh?! SHE'S GONE!

BUT WHERE--?

I SAW HER ON THE STAIRS, MISTER! SHE'S HEADIN' FOR THE ROOF!

THANKS!

SECONDS LATER...

SOME SORT OF HOVERCRAFT, JUST TAKING OFF!

GOT IT!

THWIP

OR HAS IT GOT ME?!

SAN FRANCISCO.

HE'S FAINTED AGAIN, MISTER TREECE!

WELL? REVIVE HIM!

YES, SIR. I'LL PREPARE ANOTHER IN-JECTION.

HE'S THE FIRST *LIVE* PARK DWELLER WE'VE CAPTURED!

I *HAVE* TO KNOW WHAT *HE* KNOWS!

BUT WHAT COULD SOME *HOBO* KNOW THAT--

JENKINS, DO I *PAY* YOU TO ASK *QUESTIONS?*

UH... NO...

THEN *DON'T!*

THERE'S A FORTUNE IN *GOLD* BENEATH THAT PARK! BUT IF THOSE *SCAVENGERS* FIND IT, MAKE IT PUBLIC, THE *CITY* COULD CLAIM IT ALL!

I'VE GOT TO LOCATE THEIR UNDERGROUND LAIR AND TAKE THEM OUT OF THE PICTURE, ONE WAY... OR *ANOTHER!*

WHILE, IN THE DESERT --

--A PNEUMATIC LIFT LOWERS A DISTINCTIVE CRAFT INTO THE LIFE FOUNDATION COMPLEX...

...CARRYING A RED-AND-BLUE STOWAWAY WITH IT!

WOMAN MUST BE THE ONE I FOUGHT!

SYMBIOTE'S FORMED INTO CIVILIAN CLOTHES!

BUT I CAN DEAL WITH THEM LATER!

RIGHT NOW I HAVE TO GET A LINE ON VENOM! LET'S SEE, WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO --

--SPIDER-SENSE! SOMEONE COMING THIS WAY!

OKAY, THE DIRECT APPROACH IT IS!

EXCUSE ME!

Hmh?

I SEEM TO BE LOST--!

--COULD YOU TELL ME WHERE YOUR LIVING ALIEN COSTUME DEPARTMENT IS?

WHAT THE--?!

ANOTHER GUARD!

AND MORE COMING OUT OF THAT ELEVATOR!

THIS IS NOT WHAT I WANTED!

WOULD'VE GOTTEN FARTHER IF I'D KEPT A LOW PROFILE!

THWIP

GOTTA REMOVE "DIRECT APPROACH" FROM MY LIST OF OPTIONS! Oh, WELL...

VENOM!

WHERE IS HE?!

FIRST ONE WHO *TALKS* GETS TO STAY *CONSCIOUS!*

HOW ANNOYING.

IT APPEARS, MISTER BROCK, THAT YOU HAVE A *CHAMPION*...

...AND THAT YOU'VE JUST BECOME MORE *TROUBLE* THAN YOU'RE *WORTH!*

DOCTOR EMERSON, INSTIGATE... *REMOVAL* PROCE-DURES.

NO! T-TRYING TO *SEPARATE* US. TAKE YOU AWAY... B-BREAK OUR *BOND!*

STOP IT! S-STOOOOOO

OAARG

PLK

ATTENTION, SPIDER-MAN! I HAVE SOME NEWS YOU MAY FIND OF INTEREST.

CARLTON DRAKE?! THEN THE LIFE FOUNDATION IS BEHIND ALL THIS?

YOU SAY YOU'VE COME FOR VENOM, UNDOUBTEDLY TO BRING THAT MISCREANT TO JUSTICE. BUT AS YOU CAN SEE ON THE SCREEN BEHIND ME...

...THAT PARTICULAR NECESSITY NO LONGER EXISTS!

EDDIE BROCK... DEAD?!

MAYBE... BUT ONE THING'S FOR SURE: SPIDEY WILL WISH HE WAS DEAD WHEN HE RUNS INTO BIG PROBLEMS NEXT ISSUE! ANOTHER SYMBIOTE..?

NAAHH...

FIVE OF 'EM! CHECK IT OUT IN THIRTY DAYS!

R.LIM-DELAROSA.

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YOU WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES!
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VENOM™

LETHAL PROTECTOR

CAN EVEN SPIDER-MAN™ HELP BEAT THE ODDS?!

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1963-1993

BAGLEY
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PART FIVE OF SIX

STAN LEE PRESENTS

VENOM: LETHAL PROTECTOR

PART 5

SYMBIOCIDE

IN A LABORATORY BENEATH CALIFORNIA'S SWELTERING MOJAVE DESERT...

AS YOU CAN SEE ON THE SCREEN BEHIND ME, SPIDER-MAN...

EDDIE BROCK -- BETTER KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS "VENOM"--

-- IS QUITE DEAD!

DAVID MICHELINIE
WRITER

RON LIM
BREAKDOWNS

SAM DELAROSA
FINISHES

PARKER & STARKINGS
LETTERS

MARIE JAVINS
COLORS

DANNY FINGEROTH
EDITOR

TOM DEFALCO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

AND SINCE *HE* WAS YOUR REASON FOR INVADING THE *LIFE FOUNDATION'S* PROPERTY IN THE *FIRST* PLACE--

--THERE'S REALLY NO REASON FOR YOU TO *STAY!*

LOOK, *DRAKE*, I'VE GONE UP AGAINST VENOM A LOT! AND HE'S *NOT* THAT EASY TO KILL! SO IF YOU DON'T MIND--

--I'LL RESERVE JUDGEMENT TILL I CAN SEE FOR *MYSELF!*

ACTUALLY--

--I RATHER DO MIND!

MR. DRAKE! I'VE FOUND A PULSE! IT'S FAINT, BUT CLEAR!

HE MUST HAVE JUST PASSED OUT DUE TO THE TRAUMA OF BEING SEPARATED FROM HIS LIVING COSTUME!

TOLD YA!

NYAH-NYAH!

BWA

TAKE BROCK TO THE DISSECTION LAB. HIS SYMBIOTE COSTUME WILL REMAIN HERE FOR STUDY.

AND SPIDER-MAN?

WE'VE BEEN WONDERING WHAT MIGHT MAKE A GOOD FINAL TEST FOR THE "CHILDREN," HAVEN'T WE? WELL...

...I THINK KILLING SPIDER-MAN WOULD DO NICELY!

THAT TAKES CARE OF THE GUARDS -- BUT WHAT ABOUT EDDIE BROCK?

HE MAY BE ALIVE *NOW*, BUT UNLESS I CAN FIND--

WAIT..!

SPIDER-SENSE TINGLING!

THAT DOOR! THOSE EYES!

VENOM?

NO!

YULP!

F-F-F-FIVE VENOMS!!!

INTERLUDE: SAN FRANCISCO.

PARK CLOSED BY ORDER OF THE CITY

WHERE OLD PROBLEMS TAKE NEW TURNS...!

I'VE SPENT *ENOUGH* TIME AND MONEY LOOKING FOR THOSE *SQUATTERS* LIVING BENEATH THE PARK!

YES, SIR, MR. TREECE.

THEY STAND BETWEEN ME AND A FORTUNE IN *GOLD!* THEREFORE--

TREECE CONSTRU

--THEY'VE GOT TO *GO!*

I ELIMINATED *ONE* PROBLEM WHEN I SET THE *LIFE FOUNDATION* ON VENOM! AND AS FOR THE SQUATTERS, WELL...

...IF *I* CAN'T FIND THEM, THESE *EXPLOSIVES* SHOULD REMOVE THEM JUST AS EFFICIENTLY!

WE'D BETTER TELL ETHAN AND THE COUNCIL ABOUT THIS, FAST!

YEAH! I HAVE A FEELING THEY MIGHT REGRET--

--NOT KEEPING THAT *BROCK* GUY AROUND TO *PROTECT* US!

WHILE IN THE MOJAVE...

I'LL LOG BROCK IN ON THE COMPUTER, PAULY--

-- YOU ADD SOME MORE RESTRAINING STRAPS.

WHY? THE MUSCLE-BOUND JERK'S STILL SNOOZIN'!

HA! I ALWAYS DID HATE TOUGH GUYS LIKE HIM!

BUT HE WON'T BE SUCH A BIG SHOT AFTER THE DOCS OPEN 'IM UP!

IN FACT, I THINK I'LL STAY AN' WATCH--

--HUH?!!

WATCH THIS!

MY "OTHER" TAUGHT ME TO ENDURE PAIN, TO THROW IT OFF AND RECOVER QUICKLY!

AND I WON'T GIVE YOU TIME TO STRAP ME IN.

=GHLK=

YOU SHOULD BE UNCONSCIOUS FOR HOURS BEFORE--

?

--NO! S-S-SONIC GUN! ARE THOSE BLASTED THINGS EVERYWHERE?

CERTAIN FREQUENCIES... ARE ONE OF THE FEW THINGS... THAT CAN CAUSE MY "OTHER" AGONY!

B-BUT THERE'S SOMETHING... YOU SHOULD KNOW!

WITHOUT MY "OTHER'S" ALIEN FORM... L-LINKED TO MY OWN METABOLISM...

THOSE FREQUENCIES DON'T HURT ME AT ALL!

GOTCHA!

WHILE...

THESE THINGS DON'T TRIGGER MY EARLY-WARNING SPIDER-SENSE!

JUST LIKE VENOM AND...

...CARNAGE?

CARNAGE WAS CREATED WHEN A SPAWN OF VENOM'S COSTUME JOINED WITH A PSYCHOPATHIC SERIAL KILLER!

COULD THESE BE THE RESULT OF OTHER SPAWN?

OH, MAN! FIVE ENEMIES WITH THE POWER OF VENOM AND CARNAGE?

MAYBE I SHOULD'VE STAYED IN NEW YORK...!

THE EXPERIMENT SEEMS TO BE A SUCCESS--WE MAY HAVE FINALLY FOUND WHAT WE'VE BEEN *LOOKING* FOR!

THE SURVIVAL COMMUNITY WE'RE BUILDING WILL NEED GUARDIANS AGAINST VANDALS AND JEALOUS HAVE-NOTS!

AND BY REMOVING VENOM'S LAST "SEEDS," THEN ARTIFICIALLY ACCELERATING THEIR MATURATION PROCESS AND JOINING THEM WITH VOLUNTEERS--

--WE MAY HAVE CREATED OUR PERFECT *POLICEMEN!*

SPIDER-MAN'S *DEFEAT* WILL BE THE FINAL PROOF!

THEY'RE GANGING UP, TRYING TO *IMPALE* ME! BUT THEY FORGOT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT--

-- MY SPIDER-STRENGTH!

PHWOB

SSSSSSSS

WHOA! ONE OF THEM'S SLINGING BITS OF ITS SUBSTANCE--

--BURNING THE WALL!

THAT'S A NEW TRICK!

MUST BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE ITS METABOLISM, TURN ITS BODY TO ACID!

GHOOM

BUT THEY'RE OBVIOUSLY NEW AT THIS! KEEP LEAVING THEMSELVES OPEN!

THWIP

THWIP

WHILE I'VE GOT EXPERIENCE ON MYSIDE!

AND THAT GIVES ME THE ADVANTAGE OF--

BLOK

-- SURPRISE?

SH-SHE ABSORBED MY WEBBING! SPITTING IT OUT LIKE A FUR-BALL!

HHHHHHHHHK

STOP!

THESE ARE THE OFFSPRING OF MY "OTHER"! BUT THEY HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO *BOND* WITH THEIR HOSTS!

EDDIE? DON'T--!

I MUST! THEY'RE STILL INNOCENT, AND MAY YET BE SAVED!

COME TO ME, CHILDREN! AND TOGETHER WE MAY RIGHT THE WRONGS DONE THIS DAY!

COME TO ME--!

BAM

BAM

BAM

BAM

BAM

THAT... D-DIDN'T GO QUITE AS WELL... AS I'D HOPED...!

WHILE IN A TIME-LOST CITY BENEATH SAN FRANCISCO, NOW A HAVEN FOR THE ONCE-HOMELESS--

WE SAW IT, ETHAN--

--A WHOLE TRUCKLOAD OF CRATES, ALL LABELED "EXPLOSIVES"!/

DIRE NEWS, INDEED.

I KNEW TREECE WOULDN'T BE CONTENT TO LET HIS MECHANICAL DIGGERS KEEP SEARCHING FOR US!

NOW, ELIZABETH--!

HIS PATIENCE IS SPENT! HE'S GOING TO CRUMBLE OUR WORLD AROUND US!

IF ONLY YOU'D LISTENED, LET MR. BROCK STAY! HE WOULD HAVE--

--CORRUPTED US ONE AND ALL! HE'S A MURDERER! A DEMON!

WE WOULD HAVE BEEN SLAUGHTERED IN OUR SLEEP, AS SURELY AS--

THAT'S ENOUGH REV. RAKESTRAW! ARGUING WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WON'T HELP ANYTHING!

WE NEED SOLUTIONS FOR WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW!

SUGGESTIONS?

SILENCE FILLS THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

AS, MANY MILES AWAY...

SUGGESTIONS?

THE DISSECTION LAB!

THE DISSEC--?!

Oh, NEVER MIND.

Jump

Jump

I'LL FIND OUT WHEN I GET THERE!

HURRY! I USED TWO WHOLE WEBBING CARTRIDGES TO BLOCK THAT DOORWAY, BUT THEY'RE TEARING THROUGH IT ALREADY!

MY GUARDS DROPPED THESE SONIC GUNS!

THEY'VE PROVED EFFECTIVE AGAINST MY "OTHER" IN THE PAST!

I GET IT!

WE JUST HOPE THERE'S TRUTH IN THAT OLD SAYING..

"-- LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON!

"WELL, OKAY, SONS AND DAUGHTERS!"

GYAAAAAHH!

THAT'S ENOUGH! THERE'S NO NEED TO CAUSE ANY MORE PAIN!

THEY MADE THEIR CHOICE! THEY'RE NO LONGER INNOCENT...!

AND THEY'RE ALSO NO LONGER OUT OF IT!

CHRAK

ONE MUST'VE DUCKED DOWN LET THE OTHERS BLOCK THE SONICS!

THIS WON'T HOLD HIM LONG!

THUMP

WE HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER WAY TO--

--EDDIE?

YEEESH! WHERE IS HE OFF TO NOW?!

IF ANYONE EVER TOLD ME THAT ONE DAY--

MY "OTHER" IS THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT THE SPAWN-- STRENGTH AGAINST STRENGTH!

GUARD OUR BACKS!

--I'D ACTUALLY BE HELPING EDDIE BROCK JOIN WITH HIS SYMBIOTE...!

NAAAH! I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE IT!

THERE!

IT LIVES!

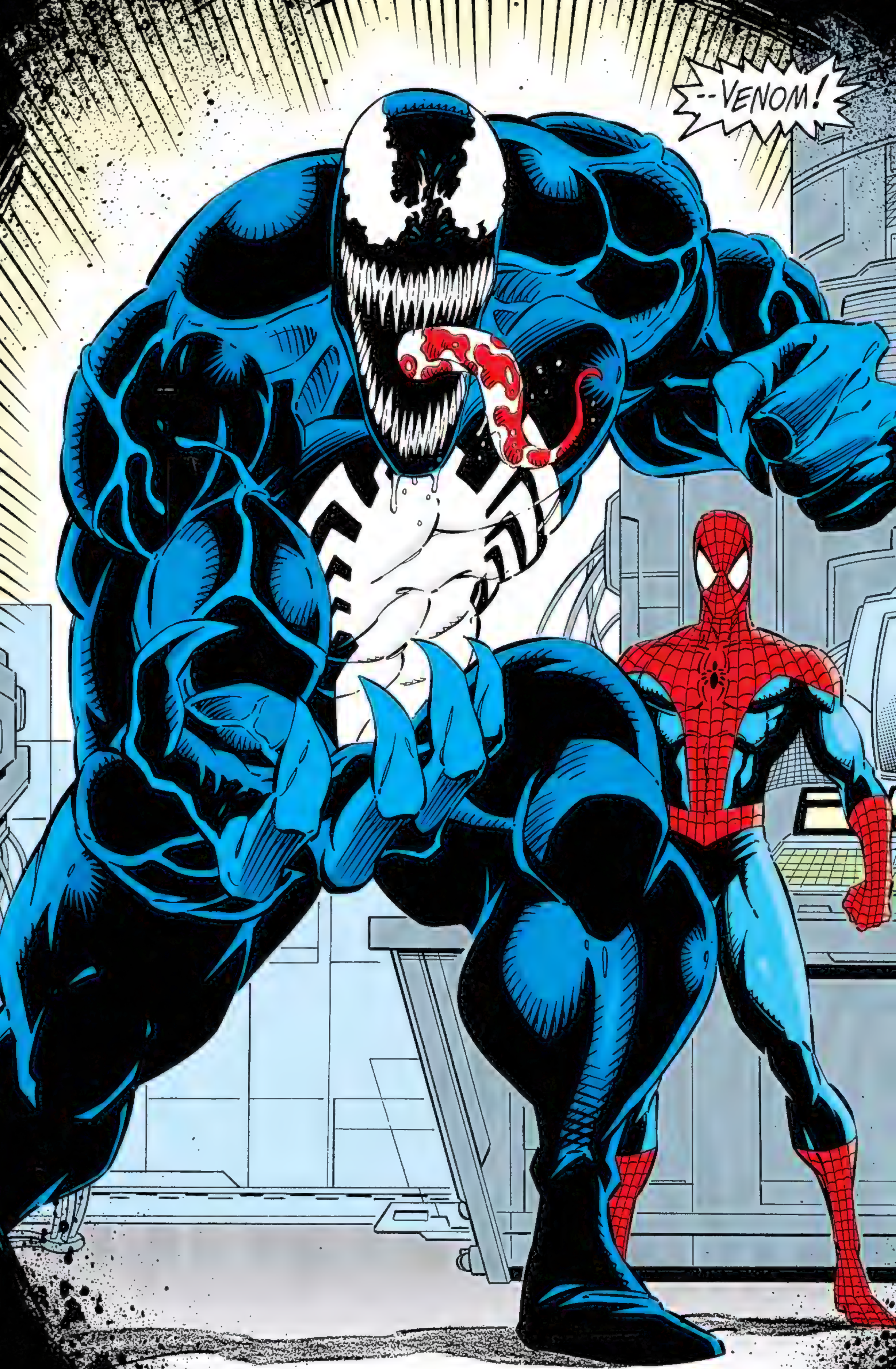
DID YOU MISS ME?

PLEEP

NO LONGER!

TEK

FOR ONCE AGAIN... AND FOREVER WE ARE--


--VENOM!

FOREVER'S A LONG TIME, CREEP!

THE FIFTH GUARDIAN, THE ONE THAT AVOIDED THE SONICS!

BUT... WHY FIGHT HIM WHEN YOU CAN TRAP HIM? SPIDER-MAN, THAT CONSOLE BEHIND YOU--!

IT CONTROLS THE SOUND CAGE THAT HELD US BEFORE YOU GOT HERE!

ACTIVATE IT, AND WE'LL THROW THIS UPSTART IN!

EASY TO SAY! THESE BUTTONS AREN'T LABELED, JUST NUMBERED!

WHICH ONE DO I PUSH? WHICH--?!

Ahhhhh, NUTS!

TIK

SKREEEEEE

M-MY COSTUME! SMOLDERING!

R-R-ROTTING AWAY?!?

AAGGH!

YOU HIT THE WRONG CONTROL, STARTED THE MACHINE THAT ARTIFICIALLY *MATURED* THE ALIEN SPAWN!

LOOKS LIKE IT WORKS ON *ADULTS*, TOO!

IT AGED PART OF *THAT* ONE TO THE POINT OF *DECAY!*

THAT'S IT!

WE'LL WIDEN THE BEAM AND USE IT ON *ALL* OF THEM, DESTROY THEM BEFORE THEY CAN HARM MORE INNOCENTS!

BUT THAT MIGHT KILL THE *HUMANS* INSIDE!

THEY PROBABY HAVEN'T BONDED COMPLETELY--THE HOSTS SHOULD SURVIVE!

"PROBABLY"? *"SHOULD"?!* SORRY, VENOM, WE CAN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE!

YOU MEAN... *YOU* CAN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE!

WHA--?! S-SNAKED A COSTUME TENDRIL =GHK= AROUND BEHIND ME!

UUUUUUUUUUH...

WE KEPT OUR WORD--WE SWORE WE WOULDN'T *KILL* YOU.* BUT WE NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT NOT RENDERING YOU *UNCONSCIOUS!*

*IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #375.--D.

WE WERE A *CAPTIVE AUDIENCE* WHEN SCIENTISTS OPERATED THIS MACHINE.

TIK TAKATIK

THERE HE IS!

GET 'IM!

AND WE LEARN *QUICKLY....!*

AAHAAAHGH!

EEEEEEEEEEE!

GYAAAHH!

NO!

NOOOOOO!

THE SYMBIOTES-- NOTHING BUT *DUST!*

THEY'RE *DEAD!* ALL OF THEM!

THAT WAS A DIRTY TRICK, VENOM! I WON'T FORGET IT!

REALLY, SPIDER-MAN! THE *HUMANS* ARE STILL BREATHING, AREN'T THEY?

IS THERE NO *PLEASING* YOU?

BLAST!

SOUND THE EVACUATION ALERT, MR. GOMEZ, AND BEGIN AUTO-DESTRUCT PROCEDURES.

WE'LL HAVE TO *VAPORIZE* THIS ENTIRE INSTALLATION, ELIMINATE ALL TRACES OF THE LIFE FOUNDATION'S INVOLVEMENT!

THIS ISN'T THE *FIRST* TIME THAT MEDDLING WEB-SLINGER HAS COMPROMISED A MAJOR INVESTMENT!

PERHAPS, IN THE FUTURE...WE SHOULD *DO* SOMETHING ABOUT THAT!

BREET BREET

UH-OH! I'VE HAD EXPERIENCE WITH THESE GUYS! WHEN THINGS DON'T GO THEIR WAY--

--THEY TEND TO BLOW THINGS *UP!*

COME ON! I STOWED AWAY ON A 'COPTER TO GET IN HERE, AND I THINK I CAN FIND THE *HANGAR* AGAIN!

THIS MAY WORK OUT YET! I CAME TO CALIFORNIA TO NAB VENOM!

AND IF I CAN TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE ONCE WE'RE FREE, I CAN TURN HIM OVER TO--

--NO! HE'S NOT *BEHIND* ME ANYMORE!

THAT SUCKER MAY BE CRAZY... BUT HE'S NOT *STUPID!*

MOMENTS LATER, A FLEET OF FUTURISTIC FLYING CRAFT RISES INTO THE AIR, WHILE CONVOYS OF LAND VEHICLES SPEED AWAY IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

AND, SHORT SECONDS AFTER THAT...

PHASSSH

MADE IT!

AND I'D BET MY LEFT WEB-SHOOTER THAT VENOM GOT AWAY, TOO!

WHICH MEANS I'D BETTER MAKE MY WAY BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO.

THIS ISN'T FINISHED YET...!

WHILE BELOW...

E-EXCUSE ME, SIR--

-- D-DID YOU SAY *gulp!* SAN FRANCISCO?

ROLAND TREECE BETRAYED US, SOUGHT TO KEEP US FROM PROTECTING THOSE INNOCENTS AT THE PARK!

HE'S ABOUT TO LEARN HOW *BADLY* HE FAILED!

YES, DRIVER-- TO SAN FRANCISCO! AND DON'T SPARE THE HORSES!

WE HAVE PLACES TO BE, THINGS TO DO...

... AND *ENTRAILS* TO *DEVOUR!*

"*LETHAL PROTECTOR*" CONCLUDES NEXT ISSUE AS *SPIDEY* AND *VENOM* BATTLE TREECE'S FORCES -- AND EACH *OTHER!*

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VENOM

THE CHILLING CONCLUSION!

LETHAL PROTECTOR

IT'S NOT THEIR FINAL BATTLE--

--BUT IT JUST MIGHT BE THEIR GREATEST!

BAGLEY
DELAROSA

THE MARIN COUNTY ESTATE OF BUSINESS MOGUL ROLAND TREECE, JUST BEFORE DAWN.

THAT... THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

I CUSTOM-DESIGNED MR. TREECE'S SECURITY PLAN PERSONALLY!

THE POSITIONING OF THE GUARDS, THE CAMERAS, THE TRIP-BEAMS--

--EVERYTHING WAS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION! IT WAS *PERFECT!*

NOTHING COULD HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH WITHOUT SOUNDING A DOZEN ALARMS! *NOTHING*--

ahem

--HUMAN?

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE CONCLUSION OF VENOM:
LETHAL PROTECTOR by

DAVID MICHELINIE — WRITER
RON LIM — PENCILER
SAM DELAROSA — INKER
RICK PARKER — LETTERER
MARIE JAVINS — COLORIST
DANNY FINGEROTH — EDITOR

TOM DEFALCO ----EDITOR IN CHIEF

ÈRISCO KILL!

YOU! Y-YOU'RE THAT... *THING!*

THE ONE THAT BROKE INTO THE TREECE BUILDING DOWN IN THE CITY!

AWWWW, HOW SWEET! YOU *REMEMBER* US!

BUT WE REQUIRE INFORMATION, AND RETURNING TO TREECE'S BUSINESS HEADQUARTERS IS TOO RISKY! SO WE'VE COME *HERE* TO FIND OUT WHY HE'S OFFERED TO "RENOVATE" A PARK IN SAN FRANCISCO -- -- A PLAN THAT COULD DESTROY A SOCIETY OF INNOCENT PEOPLE LIVING *BENEATH* THAT PARK!

AND *YOU'RE* GOING TO TELL US...

...AREN'T YOU?

NOT IN *THIS* LIFETIME!

BDAM
BDAM

BDAM
BDAM
BDAM
BDAM

MOVE IT, CRANE! YOU KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT BULLETS--

"-- WON'T STOP THAT MONSTER!"

POK
POK
POK
POK
POK
POK
POK

MADE IT! AS MR. TREECE'S SECURITY ADVISOR, I HELPED DESIGN THIS "SAFE ROOM"!

THAT SOLID STEEL DOOR WAS BUILT AS A BARRIER AGAINST KIDNAPPERS!

BUT IT SHOULD BE JUST AS EFFECTIVE AGAINST--

RRENNGH

PEEK-A-BOO!

WE SEE YOU!

TAK

NICE TRY, MONSTER! BUT THAT *LASER GRID* WILL CUT YOU TO RIBBONS IF YOU TRY TO GET ME!

THEN IT'S A GOOD THING WE DON'T HAVE TO *GET* YOU..

GHK

..TO *HURT* YOU!

WE ALWAYS WONDERED HOW LONG A MAN COULD LIVE WITHOUT BREATHING!

ONE-MISSISSIPPI, TWO-MISSISSIPPI...

TAK

BETTER!

NOW, ABOUT THAT INFORMATION...?

AND DO STICK TO THE TRUTH-- NOTHING CUTE, NOTHING HEROIC.

OR YOU MIGHT NOT SEE TOMORROW...

...LITERALLY!

TREECE'S MONEY BUYS MY LOYALTY... NOT MY LIFE.

WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW BEGAN A LONG TIME AGO...

"... IN *1906*! A FOREIGN POWER, HOSTILE TO THE UNITED STATES, SENT A SECRET SHIPMENT OF **GOLD BULLION** TO FINANCE A GROUP OF ANARCHISTS!

"BUT THEY DIDN'T COUNT ON THE GREAT *EARTHQUAKE!*

"THEY THOUGHT THAT IF OUR *GOVERNMENT* WAS OVERTHROWN, THE U.S. WOULD BE RIPE FOR *CONQUEST!*

"THE ONLY MEN WHO KNEW OF THE TREASONOUS PLAN *DIED* IN THAT HOLOCAUST, THEIR BLOOD-MONEY BURIED BENEATH RUBBLE!

"IN THE AFTERMATH, A *PARK* WAS BUILT OVER THE DEBRIS, THE GOLD FORGOTTEN FOR GENERATIONS.

"BUT SOME MONTHS AGO, WHILE ACQUIRING ANTIQUES FOR HIS PRIVATE COLLECTION, *ROLAND TREECE* DISCOVERED A DOCUMENT SHOWING WHERE THE GOLD WAS TO HAVE BEEN STORED IN OLD SAN FRANCISCO!

"USING HISTORY AND SCIENCE, HE DETERMINED WHERE IT WOULD BE *NOW*, AND SET UP THE PARK 'RENOVATION' TO EXPLAIN ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO *RECOVER* THE TREASURE.

"BUT HIS EXO-SUITED *DIGGERS* SOON FOUND THERE WERE PEOPLE LIVING *BENEATH* THE PARK! AND SINCE THE GOLD IS TECHNICALLY ON *PUBLIC* PROPERTY, THE CITY COULD *CLAIM* IT IF THEY KNEW ABOUT IT!

"THAT'S WHY *CHARGES* ARE BEING SET OFF AT SUNRISE, OSTENSIBLY TO LEVEL THE AREA FOR LANDSCAPING; INSTEAD, THEY'LL BE DIRECTED *DOWNWARD*, TO ELIMINATE POTENTIAL *WITNESSES!*"

TREECE SEEKS WEALTH--

--AT THE COST OF INNOCENT *LIVES?*

NEVER!

THAT SHOULD PREVENT TREECE'S UNDERLING FROM *WARNING* HIM!

BUT IT'S ALMOST DAYLIGHT! THOSE EXPLOSIVES COULD BE TRIGGERED *AT ANY MOMENT!*

WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO--

SAN FRANCISCO, A SHORT WHILE LATER.

DRIFTING FOG DIMS THE RAYS OF A RISING SUN...

... AS WELL AS THE SPIRITS OF A VISITING HERO!

OKAY... NOW WHAT?

DANGER! DEMOLITION TODAY!

DANGER

VENOM AND I HAD A *TRUCE!* BUT I COULDN'T LET GO, HAD TO COME HERE FROM NEW YORK LOOKING FOR HIM!

WHEN WE TANGLED WITH THE *LIFE FOUNDATION* OUT IN THE DESERT;* HE MENTIONED THE NAME "ROLAND TREECE"!

* LAST ISSUE. --D.

AND WITH MY NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS AS *PETER PARKER*, IT WASN'T DIFFICULT TO LEARN THAT TREECE WOULD BE *HERE* THIS MORNING! BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW THAT'S GOING TO HELP ME FIND--

--VENOM?

THAT'S IT... QUIETLY!

WE MUSTN'T DISTURB THE NICE POLICEMEN!

WE'LL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF ACCOMPLISHING OUR *MISSION*...

...IF NO ONE KNOWS WE'RE HE--

=RRRK=

DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WANT TO KILL THAT *TREECE* GUY--

--BUT I'M GOING TO SEE THAT YOU *DON'T!*

I *KNEW* I SHOULD NEVER HAVE LET YOU GO!

YOU'RE INSANE! *BLOODTHIRSTY!* THERE'S NO WAY YOU SHOULD BE FREE TO--

WHLMF?!

WE DON'T HAVE *TIME* FOR THIS!

IF TREECE COMPLETES HIS PLAN, AN ENTIRE SOCIETY OF INNOCENT PEOPLE WILL *DIE!*

ON THEIR OWN, THEY WON'T STAND A CHANCE!

YOU'VE GOT TO *HELP* US, SPIDER-MAN!

H-HELP... *YOU?!*

PLEASE.

I DON'T GET IT! EVER SINCE EDDIE BROCK JOINED WITH THAT LIVING COSTUME, ALL HE'S WANTED WAS TO *KILL ME!*

NOW WHEN HE *CAN* HE ASKS FOR *HELP?*

THE ONLY THING THAT'S EVER MATTERED TO HIM AS MUCH AS *MY DEATH* HAS BEEN THE PROTECTION OF *INNOCENTS!* SO IF HE'S WILLING TO LET *ME* LIVE--

--I HAVE TO BELIEVE HE'S TELLING THE *TRUTH!*

ALL RIGHT, VENOM... TALK!

WHILE AT THE MAIN CONSTRUCTION SITE...

ALL SET, Mr. TREECE!

EXCELLENT, COOPERSMITH!

THAT BONUS I PAID YOU "UNDER THE TABLE," TO DIRECT THE EXPLOSIONS INTO THE EARTH...

...YOU'VE *EARNED* IT?

THAT I HAVE, SIR!

EVERYTHING'S PRIMED, JUST PUSH THE *IGNITE* BUTTON IN THE COMMAND TRAILER--

--AND SAN FRANCISCO'S IN FOR ONE *HECK* OF A WAKE-UP CALL!

BETTER IDEA: HOW 'BOUT LETTING THE CITY *SLEEP IN* TODAY?

HUH--?

MATTER OF FACT... I *INSIST!*

SO DO WE!

WAIT! THE POLICE EXPECT NOISE, BUT GUNSHOTS WOULD BRING THEM RUNNING! THERE'S ANOTHER WAY!

JENKINS! GET YOUR CREW HERE ON THE DOUBLE!

OOO, DECISIONS, DECISIONS! WHAT SHOULD WE BREAK FIRST?

YOUR NOSE, YOUR NECK... OR WHAT PASSES FOR YOUR SPINE?

HOW ABOUT--

--EVERYTHING!

WHA--?

Ah. JENKINS, WE PRESUME...?

Y'ER A REG'LAR SHERLOCK HOLMES, PAL!

SO TRY DEDUCIN' YER WAY OUTTA *THIS!*

WE'VE FOUGHT THESE MECHANISMS BEFORE, SPIDER-MAN!

THEY'RE CALLED "*DIGGERS*"!

AND THEIR *TOOLS* MAKE FORMIDABLE WEAPONS!

THAT *SONIC SHOVEL* FOR INSTANCE-- BESIDES FIRE, *SOUND* IS THE ONLY THING THAT CAN HURT US!

THEN GET OUT OF ITS RANGE!

THWIP

I'LL TRY TO THROW ITS AIM OFF!

?!

AAAAGGH!

ZZAAACH

WHAT TH--?!

OH, MAN! SONIC BEAM HIT THE FACEPLATE ON THAT OTHER ONE! GUY INSIDE'S LOSING CONTROL!

TALK ABOUT TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE!

THE DAMAGED ONE'S SWINGING AROUND, CUTTING HIS PARTNER'S MACHINE IN HALF!

WHILE WATCHING NEARBY...

ETHAN! I-IT'S *VENOM!* AND HE'S BROUGHT SOMEONE TO HELP FIGHT TREECE'S THUGS!

HE *SAID* HE'D PROTECT OUR HIDDEN CITY! BUT, ELIZABETH--

"--HE DOESN'T SEE THAT DAMAGED TRUCK LEAKING FUEL! HOW CAN WE *WARN* HIM?"

YOU CAN'T!

THAT DIAMOND DRILL COULD PROBABLY CUT THROUGH *GRANITE* WITH EASE!

WARRRRRRRRR

WARRRNNNG!

DOES A MIGHTY FINE JOB ON YOUR *KNEECAP,* TOO!

HE'S RUINED EVERY-THING! THEY'LL TAKE AWAY MY BUSINESS, MY REPUTATION--

--EVEN MY FREEDOM!

CURSE YOU, MONSTER! I MAY HAVE LOST-- --BUT YOU WON'T WIN!

I'LL STILL SET OFF THE EXPLOSIVES!

HEADING FOR THE COMMAND TRAILER!

GOING TO KILL HUNDREDS OUT OF SPITE!

AND HE CALLS US "MONSTER"?

I'LL HOLD OFF THE DIGGERS, VENOM! YOU GET TREECE!

INDEED WE WILL! AND NOTHING ON EARTH WILL STOP US!

HOWEVER, AN ERRANT SPARK FROM COLLIDING METAL, FALLING ON SPILLED DIESEL FUEL--

--SAYS OTHERWISE!

FIRE! SURROUNDING THE TRAILER! BLOCKING OUR WAY!

NOOOO!

MY "OTHER" PULLING BACK! I FEEL ITS FEAR-- ITS *PAIN!*

PUSH ONE BUTTON... AND IT ALL ENDS!

SPIDER-MAN--!

NO GOOD! HE CAN'T *HEAR!* IT'S UP TO US ALONE!

WE MAY DIE IN THE ATTEMPT--BUT COULD WE TRULY *LIVE* IF WE DIDN'T *TRY?*

WE MUST DO IT! *DO IT NOW--*

WAAAAIIIEE!

P-PUSH ONE BUTTON...

...AND IT ALL--

KRANCH

--ENDS?

LET GO! L-LET GO OF ME!

D-DON'T... LET GO! IGNORE... THE BURNING! WE CAN'T GIVE UP! CAN'T...

...AND...

...WON'T!

THIS IS THE LAST-- hmh? VENOM!

ON FIRE?!

SORRY, FRIEND, BUT TO PARAPHRASE MY UNLIKELY PARTNER:

"I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!"

EDDIE? GEEZ, Y-YOU WENT *INTO* THE FLAMES, JUST TO GET *TREECE*? BUT THE AGONY--!

HOW COULD YOU PUT YOURSELF *THROUGH* SOMETHING LIKE THAT?!

WOULD YOU... HAVE DONE... ANY *LESS*?

WELL, I... I-I...

NO.

SIRENS! GUESS I'D BETTER TAKE VENOM INTO CUSTODY.

SO WHY DOESN'T THAT MAKE ME--

--HAPPY? HE'S GONE!

HE WAS HURT BAD!

BUT HIS *SURVIVAL* INSTINCT MUST BE GREATER THAN HIS PAIN --

--EVEN GREATER THAN HIS DESIRE TO STAY AND *KILL* TREECE.

"AND WITH HIS COSTUME'S ABILITY TO MIMIC CLOTHING AND BACKGROUNDS, HE COULD BE *ANYWHERE* BY NOW!

"ANYWHERE AT ALL...!"

TWO DAYS LATER, AT SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT...

THAT'S RIGHT, MARY JANE--

--LAGUARDIA, 6:15. I'LL TAKE A CAB HOME. HMM? NO, HE'S STILL OUT HERE. THINGS... HAPPENED.

NO, NO, I'M FINE!

THERE WERE TIMES HE *COULD* HAVE MADE GOOD ON HIS PAST THREATS TO ME, BUT DIDN'T, HE SEEMED MORE CONCERNED WITH SAVING *INNOCENTS*--

--JUST LIKE HE SAID WHEN WE MADE OUR "DEAL".* SO I GUESS I HAVE TO BELIEVE HIM. EVEN I REALIZE I CAN'T MOVE TO CALIFORNIA AND SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE TRYING TO HUNT HIM *DOWN*.

I COULD'VE TOLD YOU THAT. BUT I GUESS YOU HAD TO FIND IT OUT FOR YOURSELF.

YEAH. WITH HIS CAPACITY FOR BLENDING IN, SEARCHING FOR HIM'D BE PRETTY FUTILE. AND BESIDES--

* AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #375.--D.

--I'D MISS *YOU* TOO MUCH.

SEE YOU TONIGHT, SWEETHEART.

I LOVE YOU.

EPILOGUE: THE PARK.

TREECE BROKE, TOLD OFFICIALS WHERE THE *GOLD* WAS.

THANKFULLY, IT'S FAR ENOUGH FROM THAT UNDERGROUND CITY TO KEEP THEIR LOCATION SECRET!

BUT THAT PUTS *US* BACK AT SQUARE ONE: NO HOME, NO PURPOSE... NO PROSPECTS! SO WHAT CAN WE--

EDDIE?

ELIZABETH? ETHAN--?!

WE HOPED YOU'D BE BACK.

THE CITY COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU. IF YOU'LL COME WITH US...?

LATER, IN A SECTION OF OLD SAN FRANCISCO LONG LOST BENEATH THE RUBBLE OF THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE...

WE ASKED YOU TO LEAVE, Mr. BROCK--

--BUT THAT WAS AFTER WE'D SEEN YOU IN BATTLE WITH TREECE'S DIGGERS!* SOME OF US WERE AFRAID YOU MIGHT TURN YOUR INCREDIBLE POWER *AGAINST* US!

BUT WE TOLD EVERYONE WHAT YOU DID *FOR* US, HOW YOU RISKED DEATH TO SAVE US FROM THOSE BOMBS! SO WE TOOK A SECOND VOTE--

* SEE ISSUE # 2. -- D.

-- AND AGREED WE WANT YOU TO *STAY*, TO BE OUR NEIGHBOR... OUR FRIEND!

YOU'LL BE *SORRY*--!

NO, REVEREND RAKESTRAW, THEY *WON'T*!

IT'S BEEN TOO LONG SINCE WE'VE BELONGED *ANYWHERE*--

-- AND WE WON'T *ABUSE* THAT TRUST!

WE WILL BE YOUR FRIEND, AND *MORE*! FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, *ALL* INNOCENTS CAN CONSIDER THEMSELVES UNDER OUR *PROTECTION*! AND WHOEVER WOULD *DARE* DO THEM HARM WILL ANSWER TO...

...!VENOM!

BUT OF COURSE, EVEN WHEN VENOM *TRIES* TO DO THE RIGHT THING... PEOPLE *DIE*! SEE WHAT WE MEAN NEXT MONTH IN THE DEBUT ISSUE OF **VENOM: FUNERAL PYRE**, AN ALL-NEW LIMITED SERIES BY CARL POTTS, TOM LYLE, AND JOE RUBINSTEIN.

RON 93
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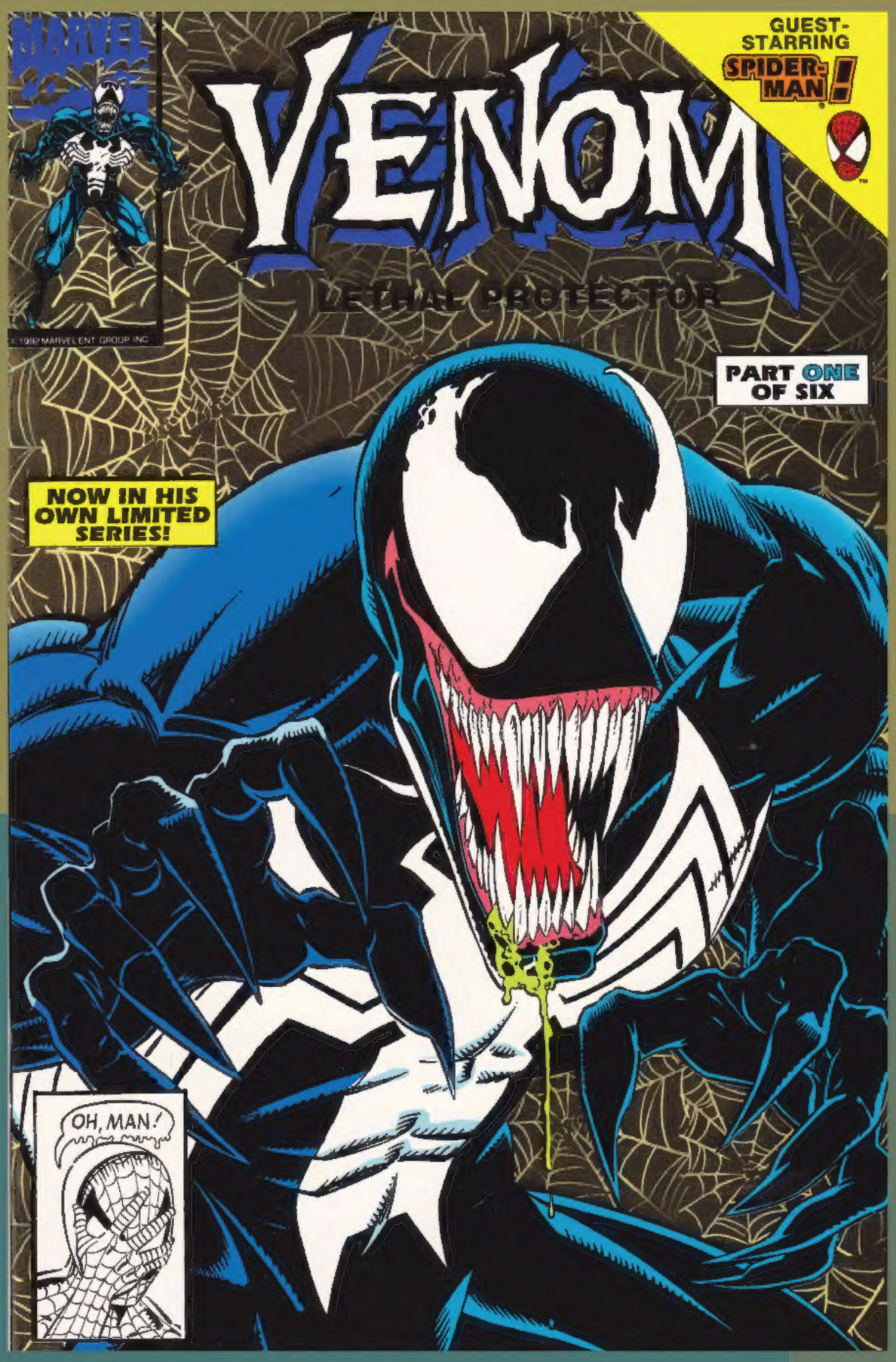

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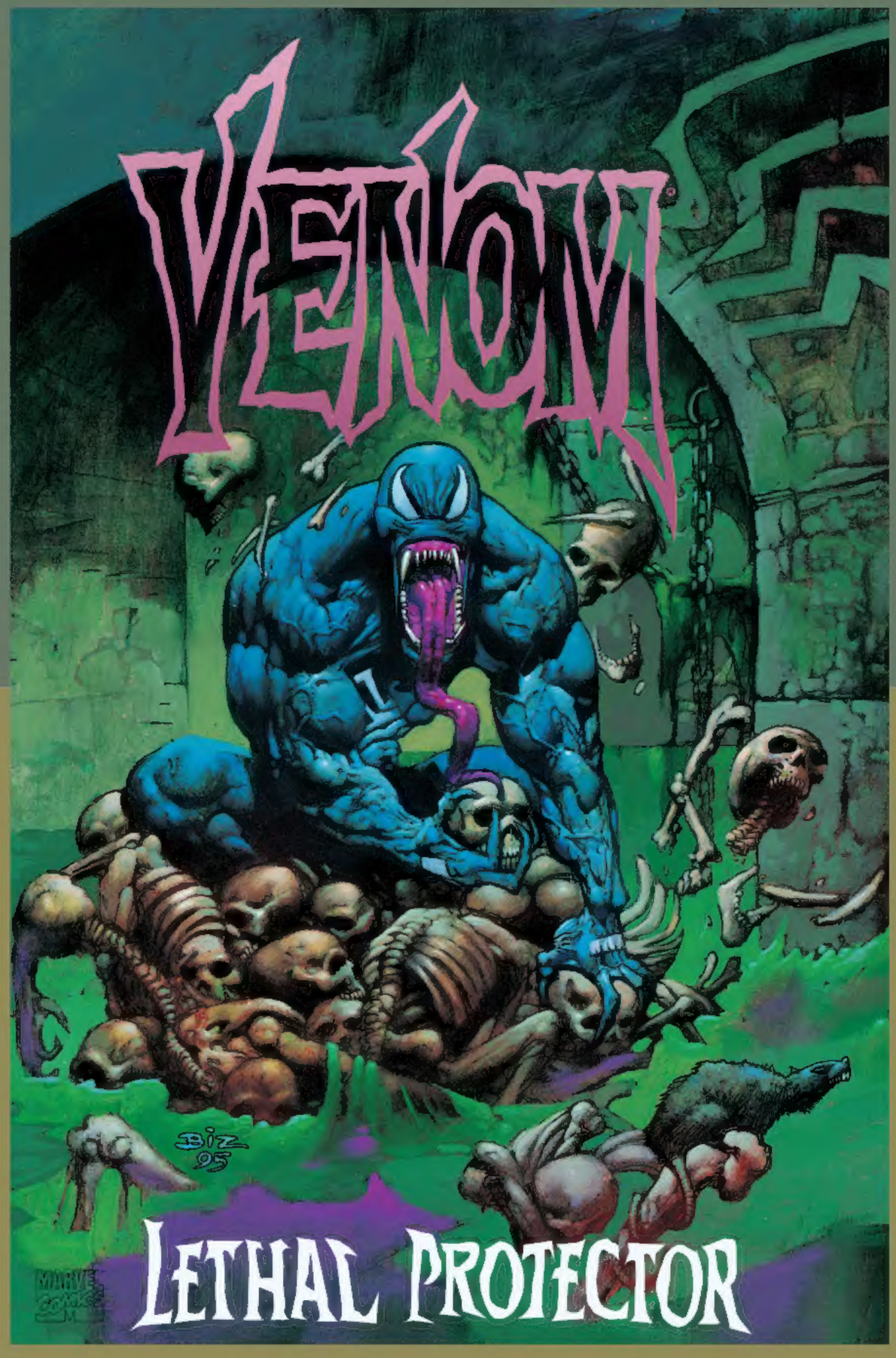

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T

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